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Woman Iceskating. Watercolor from the 1823 drawing book of Ann Jane Baker (Mrs. John James Graves).

Gift of Emily Graves.

From the collection of the Maryland Historical Society.

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The Tidewater End of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal

WILLIAM M. FRANKLIN

ANYONE WHO HAS ENJOYED A WALK ON the towpath of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal cannot fail to be impressed by the monumental proportions, the brilliant engineering, and the careful workmanship of this handsome waterway, designed to hurdle the Appalachians and join "the eastern and western waters," as they grandly said in the 1820s. It was chartered by Congress to run "from tidewater on the river Potomac in the District of Columbia" to Cumberland in western Maryland and then over the Alleghenies to "navigable waters on the river Ohio"—which meant in fact the Monongahela River near Pittsburgh.¹ This grandiose plan was inspired by the success of the great Erie Canal linking the Hudson River at Albany with the Great Lakes at Buffalo. When the first section of the Erie Canal was opened in 1819, immense receipts rolled in; before its completion in 1825 the Erie had earned a million dollars and set off an epidemic of canal mania throughout the land. There was no doubt that the new C and O Canal would bring comparable riches, so it was designed to be even wider and deeper, bigger and better than the Erie. The national importance of this stupendous project was attested by the fact that the federal government supplied most of the initial capital, and the President of the United States—scholarly, crusty John Quincy Adams—turned the first spadeful of earth in 1828, oratorically adding the projected 341-mile waterway to the seven wonders of the ancient world.²

Dr. Franklin, formerly Director of the Historical Office, Department of State, is now retired and lives in Washington, D.C.

One would suppose that this magnificent interstate waterway would have had an impressive tidewater terminus in a thriving, deep-water harbor. It comes as a surprise to discover that the eastern terminus was located in a most unlikely and little-known spot: the mouth of Rock Creek, on the boundary between Washington City and Georgetown in the District of Columbia. Despite its name, Rock Creek is a muddy stream that dumps tons of silt to form a shallow delta into the Potomac. The creek is also highly temperamental, being a rushing torrent after downpours and a noxious brook in times of drought. Why did the builders of the C and O Canal pick such an unimpressive site for their major terminus? How did they manage to make it work at all? Who thought to put "Chesapeake" in the name when Rock Creek was 108 miles from the Bay up the winding Potomac? Since the canal turned out to be so unprofitable that it was never continued beyond Cumberland on the upper Potomac, is it possible that its failure to start at the Chesapeake had something to do with its inability to reach the Ohio? The answers indicate that the location of the eastern terminus was more influenced by tradition, jealousies, and politics than by hard-headed engineering and market-analysis.

Although George Washington died a generation before the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was started, he exerted an influence on where its eastern terminus came to be. From his youthful expedition to the upper Ohio valley, Washington realized how close were the headwaters of the Ohio and the Potomac. If skirting canals were built around the falls and rapids in the Potomac, the river would be

navigable for shallow-draft boats clear to Cumberland. Then, with a short portage road connecting through to the headwaters of the Monongahela, there would be established a route for migration and trade presumably of immense value. Shortly before the Revolution the squire of Mt. Vernon canvassed his wealthy friends and associates to see how much financial backing could be had for his project. As he later wrote to Thomas Jefferson, the idea was gaining supporters, but not in Baltimore, where the businessman saw no reason to encourage a scheme designed to divert to the Potomac the trade that was coming to them by road from the west.³ Washington had to shelve his plans for the eight grueling years of the War for Independence, but in 1784 the "Patowmack Company" was chartered by Virginia, with Washington as its president. Since the river is in Maryland, the assent of that state had to be obtained, and this proved to be not so simple. Foreshadowing later events, the Baltimore bloc succeeded in preventing a favorable vote, until finally the victorious General went in person to Annapolis and "swept the Assembly off its feet."⁴ A visitor to Mt. Vernon in the following year found Washington chuckling over his victory: "He is quite pleased at the idea of the Baltimore merchants laughing at him and saying it was a ridiculous plan. 'They begin now,' says the General, 'to look a little serious about the matter, as they know it must hurt their commerce amazingly.'"⁵

The General's optimism was not justified. The Patowmack Company—limited in labor, capital, and engineering skill—cleared out many channels in the river and built skirting canals around two major falls above Georgetown and three rapids near Harpers Ferry; but this was not enough to make for safe navigation in a river that was either too high or too low for much of the year. The company drifted into insolvency after paying one small dividend which President Washington did not live to see.

The most successful part of this entire project was the skirting canal that took boats around the Little Falls on the

Maryland side and brought them down to tidewater at a cove about two miles above Georgetown. This little canal was in use for local traffic clear up to 1828, and its eastern end—called Locks Cove—was the recognized head of tidewater on the Potomac. Of course, no ships of any size—not even coastal sloops—could go above Georgetown, so the narrow, shallow-draft boats that came through the canal had to be poled or paddled down the wide river to Georgetown, Washington City, or Alexandria (then a part of the District of Columbia). Although Alexandria was the farthest, many rivermen preferred it because it was safer to cross the Potomac at Locks Cove, where it is narrow, and go down along the Virginia shore which gave protection from prevailing winds. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the brilliant engineer-architect of the Capitol, noted that the choice of Locks Cove by the Virginia-dominated Patowmack Company was a political decision, designed to improve Alexandria's position in the river trade. His own idea, developed from a suggestion of President Jefferson, was for a canal that would run at a high level from the Little Falls through Georgetown, cross Rock Creek on a combined aqueduct-bridge, and proceed down Pennsylvania Avenue to deep water at the Navy Yard on the Anacostia River (then called the Eastern Branch).⁶ It was never built.

The instant success of the Erie Canal demonstrated the value of a continuous, controllable waterway in contrast to a river with a few skirting canals. The general assemblies of Virginia and Maryland woke with a start and sent a joint expedition of engineers to study the feasibility of a continuous canal from tidewater on the Potomac to navigable water on the Monongahela. Their report, dated 3 May 1822, was positive.⁷

By a remarkable coincidence (if that is what it was) the same date appears on a detailed report on the navigation of the Potomac River, prepared by the Committee on the District of Columbia of the U.S. House of Representatives. The report paid homage to the vision of President Washington, noted that the naviga-

bility of the Potomac was still poor, and stressed the engineers' conclusion that a continuous canal was thoroughly feasible. The recommendations—which reflected a creative and forceful intellect—were (1) that the Patowmack Company should be reorganized to include representatives of Virginia, Maryland, and the federal government; (2) that the company should then be given the mandate to build a continuous canal from tidewater on the Potomac to Cumberland, with the possibility of an extension to the headwaters of the Ohio; and (3) that the federal government should subscribe a million dollars to canal stock, with Maryland and Virginia contributing \$600,000 each.⁸

The report was tabled in the House without further action, but the idea had been prominently aired that the United States Government—sovereign of the District of Columbia—should be the prime mover in a great interstate canal, as it had been in the construction of the National Road which had started from Cumberland in 1815 and was into Ohio by 1822. Identifying the eastern terminus as “tidewater on the Potomac” was a patriotic echo of the charter of George Washington's company; it was also a clever way of deferring the question as to where this new canal, with all its expected riches, was to come down to the river. There was no mention of Baltimore or the Chesapeake Bay. The report was presented to the House by Joseph Kent, chairman of the District committee and representative from Prince George's County, Maryland, but the author was Charles Fenton Mercer, congressman from Loudoun County in northern Virginia, who was to be the founding father of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company.

Mercer was a Princeton-educated gentleman who had become known during his years in the Virginia Assembly as an energetic supporter of visionary causes, and a booster for economic development through roads and canals. He entered Congress in 1817, serving first on the Committee for the District of Columbia. From 1823 to 1838 he was either

chairman or a dominant member of the Committee on Roads and Canals, constantly encouraging federal participation in these internal improvements. For six of these years (1828–1833) he was also president of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company—a classic case of conflict of interest. Mercer was touchy on this subject. In the brief memoir that he wrote in retirement he stated emphatically that in his years as chairman of the Roads and Canals Committee “not a single instance occurred of an attempt to introduce or carry any measure by what is vulgarly, but aptly, called ‘log-rolling.’” Every project supported by the committee, he wrote, was national in character, and no moneys were appropriated until after surveys and estimates by skillful engineers.⁹ This was true, but Mercer (as we shall see) did not always follow the good advice of the engineers.

The engineers' report of 1822, reinforced by Mercer's, persuaded the assemblies of Virginia and Maryland to appoint a joint commission to study the whole problem in its political and commercial aspects. The commission's report was glowing: a continuous canal to the headwaters of the Ohio, said the commission, would be of immense value to the investors, to the areas it would serve, and to the country as a whole. The superiority of transport by canal rather than by turnpike was immense; the cost per mile by wagon was estimated at twenty times the cost per unit carried on the canal.

These commissioners were the first to suggest specifically that the canal should go through Georgetown and Washington City to deep water on the Eastern Branch. They also pointed out that if the merchants of Baltimore wanted a share in this profitable enterprise, the only thing needed would be “a short link to this great internal trade by a canal from Bladensburg [on the Eastern Branch] to the Patapsco at Elkridge,” the southwestern entrance to Baltimore harbor. The length of this extension canal would be only about twenty-five miles, and “the cost of this work would not be great.” The commissioners sounded one warning note: With so much at stake (they said),

local rivalries and jealousies could be expected, but history showed that in all countries such great improvements had always produced "a general increase of power, wealth, and civilization."¹⁰

Despite this much-needed homily, local rivalries sprouted along with the enthusiasm that greeted the report. John Cox, mayor of Georgetown and well-known real estate developer, exulted publicly: "Should this great work be accomplished, we may confidently look for an increase of prosperity . . . which cannot fail to cause a great and continued rise in the appreciation of property, as well as the other concomitants of a successful trade. . . . [The] completion of this work will give us advantages in trade over most of the commercial cities in the country, and will draw to this depot very much of the produce that is now distributed between the cities on either side of us."¹¹ Since businessmen in Washington City and Alexandria shared similar hopes and jealousies—each from his own self-serving point of view—the exact location of the eastern terminus was becoming a potentially explosive issue.

Heartened by the joint report, the Virginia Assembly, on George Washington's birthday in 1823, chartered a new corporation, "The Potomac Canal Company," to supplant the moribund Patowmack Company and to build a continuous canal "from tide-water in the District of Columbia to Cumberland." Since the engineers had recommended that the canal be on the Maryland side, the approval of that state would be required.

Canal boosters in the Maryland Assembly introduced a draft charter similar to the one in Richmond but it ran into stiff opposition from the powerful Baltimore bloc. The basic hostility was the same as in the days of George Washington—but now there was no charismatic general to sway the votes. Baltimore business interests saw no reason to support a canal along the Potomac, particularly since they had recently extended the Baltimore-Frederick turnpike to Cumberland in order to catch the trade now beginning to come from the Ohio country on the National Road. Wagon

freight was expensive, but in 1823 Baltimore had the best connection with the west of any city on the Atlantic coast.¹²

The idea of extending the canal to Baltimore harbor via Bladensburg and Elkrige had its advocates, but most Baltimoreans feared that the cream of the trade would be skimmed off in the District cities, with the probable support of the federal government. This disadvantage, however, could be circumvented by building a "cross-cut canal" that would branch off from the proposed Potomac Canal at some point upstream from the District line. Such a canal might go up the valley of the Monocacy River or Seneca Creek, then cross a low divide, and descend along the Patapsco watershed to Elkrige. The Maryland Assembly appointed a commission of three prominent citizens to study the terrain for such an "all-Maryland" canal, and it decided to table the charter question until the next session of the Assembly.¹³

This was a blow to canal enthusiasts, but Congressman Mercer saved the day. He saw that the charter passed by Virginia lacked two important provisions: federal government support for the proposed Potomac Canal, and a clear pledge that the canal would connect through to the Ohio. His corrective procedure was a beautiful example of political expertise. He began in August by organizing a meeting of prominent citizens at his home base of Leesburg, Virginia, from which emerged a resolution of support for a canal to the "nearest Western water" and invitations to the three District municipalities, and to all counties and towns on both sides of the Potomac to send delegates to a convention in Washington to reconsider the whole project.¹⁴

With favorable replies in hand, Mercer arranged for the convention to be held in the Supreme Court chamber of the Capitol in November. About 150 eminent gentlemen attended, including the mayors and councilmen of the District cities, together with such local celebrities as the lawyer and sometime poet, Francis Scott Key, George Washington Parke Custis, and General John Mason (son of George), who owned the foundry in Georgetown

established by Henry Foxhall. Other prominent citizens came from northern Virginia, western Pennsylvania, and even Ohio. Maryland was well represented, including several from the Chesapeake Bay area, but no delegate came from Baltimore. Mercer had taken care, however, to invite a dozen "honored guests" (canal boosters all) including Dr. William Howard of Baltimore, who was one of the three Maryland commissioners investigating possible "cross-cut" canal routes to Baltimore.

The Baltimore boycott sent the editors of the Washington *National Intelligencer* into a rage. They accused Baltimoreans of "unjust local selfishness" and "jealous hostility to the District of Columbia." Baltimore would only support the canal if a branch came to Baltimore, but that, said the editors, is "impracticable" because it would have to surmount "a vast elevation."¹⁵ The cantankerous editor of *Niles' Weekly Register* of Baltimore pointed out in his reply of 8 November that Baltimore had spent "a million of dollars on certain public roads, to obtain the trade which the canal is designed to deprive us of." In a telling blow he suggested that the people of the District would not be so enthusiastic about the Potomac Canal if there was a requirement that an arm of that canal should go to Baltimore, "though the last is so much nearer the sea than Washington."¹⁶

The convention was largely a one-man show. On the opening day (6 November) Congressman Mercer nominated for chairman his colleague Congressman Kent, and he persuaded the plenary convention to set up a central committee (with himself as chairman) where most of the real decisions were made.¹⁷ He then introduced a set of resolutions which constituted an extensive revision of the charter proposed by the Virginia Assembly for the Potomac Canal Company. The convention accepted with enthusiasm the pledge that the canal would go all the way to a navigable tributary of the Ohio. Agreement was also reached without difficulty on the method of organizing the canal company and on the amount of stock to be purchased by the

United States government, the three District cities, Maryland, and Virginia.

Arguments began over finding a name more descriptive than "Potomac Canal," since the waterway was now definitely planned to go beyond the mountains. Mercer proposed "Union Canal," but it was pointed out that Pennsylvania already had a canal by that name. Marylanders suggested "Chesapeake and Ohio" and the central committee accepted it. When this was presented to the plenary session, a perceptive delegate suggested that "Potomac and Ohio" would be more precise, and he asked for an explanation of the reason for the geographically unbalanced name proposed by the committee. For Mercer this was an anxious moment but he managed to wiggle through with dignity. He pointed out that the over-all aim was to join the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, "but it had been thought better, for the sake of precision to stop at the Ohio for one of the terminations, and, as to the other, the 'Chesapeake' had been preferred to 'Potomac' for reasons which were sufficiently obvious, but which it was not necessary to state here." At this point he must have noted either smiles or puzzled expressions in the audience, for he proceeded to explain, with a disarming show of honesty: "It was the suggestion of someone (not of myself, said Mr. M.) that, there exists, in a part of the State of Maryland, some jealousy of the Potomac interest, and as this canal might be terminated at the Patapsco, the Patuxent, or the Severn, and not in the Potomac, the general designation of the Chesapeake appeared preferable."¹⁸

Everyone knew that the Baltimoreans had to be placated if a favorable vote on the charter was to be had from the legislature in Annapolis. Indeed, Athanasius Fenwick of St. Mary's County, who had served as one of the Maryland appointees on the second joint commission with Virginia, indicated in no uncertain terms the need for soothing Baltimore by a resolution stating that "this Meeting and the friends of the Ohio and Chesapeake Canal [sic] generally, disclaim and disavow all opposition to any lateral Canal

which it is practicable to make, leading to or from the said Canal, or to any future extension through any of the States adjacent thereto."¹⁹

The convention accepted this proposal with the proviso that any lateral or extension canal should not injure the main stem, i.e., would not drain off too much water. This was a reasonable requirement, but many Baltimoreans suspected that it was really a shrewd device whereby the C and O Canal Company, dominated by District directors, could block any branch or extension to Baltimore.

Another aspect of the eastern terminus was so sensitive that no one dared raise it. The phrase "tidewater in the District of Columbia" could mean anywhere from Locks Cove down to the Eastern Branch and Alexandria harbor. Since each of the District cities hoped to be the chosen spot, Mercer avoided this Pandora's box and no one else ventured to touch the lid.

In a burst of euphoria the convention celebrated its success with a banquet at Brown's Hotel, with Mayor Carberry of Washington City as host, and with no less than Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and Secretary of War John C. Calhoun as honored guests. Forty-nine toasts were drunk, and the whole affair came to a roaring close with a standing ovation for Charles Fenton Mercer, who had made it all possible.²⁰

Mercer's campaign had not concluded. He was a personal friend of President Monroe—which helps to explain why the President's message on the State of the Union in December included a paragraph praising the canal project and recommending that Congress authorize the Federal Board of Engineers to make a survey with cost estimates of the proposed route.²¹ This recommendation was to have unexpected consequences.

The Virginia Assembly worked the convention's recommendations into a revised charter, approved in January 1824, and sent it to Annapolis for acceptance. The Maryland Assembly was in no hurry to give its assent, for the commissioners appointed early the previous year had just come in with a disturbing report.

They stated there were several possible routes for an all-Maryland canal to Baltimore via the Monocacy River or Seneca Creek. The best of these would be up the Monocacy and Lingamore Creek to the divide near Ridgeville, then down the Patapsco watershed to Elkridge and northeast to Baltimore. They warned, however, that in dry weather all of these routes might be subject to serious water shortage at the divide. The commissioners added, somewhat apologetically, that they had spent a few days looking at a possible route from Georgetown across the District of Columbia north of the Capitol to Bladensburg in Maryland and on to Elkridge. They felt that this route would be shorter and would have plenty of water. They regretted that the assembly's instructions did not permit them to survey this route in detail.

The commissioners then gave the assembly an eight-page lecture on the advantages of a canal over a wagon road for long-distance transport; and they even ventured to dispel the "apprehension" that Georgetown and Washington would take the best of the trade away from Baltimore. They pointed out that because of the bends and shallows of the Potomac it took sailing vessels an average of seven days to go from Washington to the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, whereas it took only three days from Baltimore. So even if it took two days by canal boat from Washington to Baltimore, the cargoes would still reach the Atlantic two days sooner than if shipped down the Potomac. This was a difference that skippers could not afford to ignore. Equally important was the fact that "the capital already accumulated in Baltimore must maintain her superiority, as a market, over the Potomac cities, at least for a considerable time. . . . And it must be recollected that these benefits will not, and cannot, be confined within her narrow limits; but placed as Baltimore is, in the centre of Maryland, like the heart in the animal system, they must diffuse themselves through every artery and vein of the state, bearing vigour and prosperity to its remotest extremities."²² The commissioners were arguing that Baltimore

needed the canal, but their observations suggested that the canal needed Baltimore—a thought that seems never to have occurred to canal enthusiasts in the District of Columbia.

The Maryland Assembly, perplexed by this report, did not approve the new charter in 1824. The counties along the Potomac, however, wanted the canal for their own prosperity, whether it went on to Baltimore or not, and in January 1825 they managed to get an affirmative vote in Annapolis, with the proviso that the federal government guarantee the right of Maryland to build a lateral canal to Baltimore. In March Congress approved the charter and promised that if either Virginia or Maryland wished to build a branch canal starting in, or crossing, the District of Columbia, the federal government would appoint a commission to decide whether such branch canal would adversely affect the operation of the main stem.²³ President Monroe signed the bill on his last day in office, and the announcement touched off an evening of parades and bonfires in the District of Co-

lumbia where everyone knew that prosperity was now assured.

Maryland was determined not to be left out. The assembly chartered a Maryland Canal Company to study and build a canal linking Baltimore to the C and O waterway, and it persuaded the Federal Board of Internal Improvements to appoint Dr. William Howard to determine the best route. His detailed report, essentially completed in November 1826, was unequivocal: all cross-cut routes avoiding the District of Columbia were "entirely impracticable" because of water shortage on the higher elevations. The best, shortest, and cheapest route was the one from Georgetown across the District north of the Capitol, following Maryland Avenue toward the Eastern Branch at Bladensburg in Maryland. From there the canal would roughly parallel the Washington-Baltimore turnpike (later U.S. Route 1) to Elkridge, where it would cross the Patapsco and proceed in a northeasterly direction across Gwynn's Falls to reach tidewater at the northern tip of the Middle Branch (Carroll's Point).

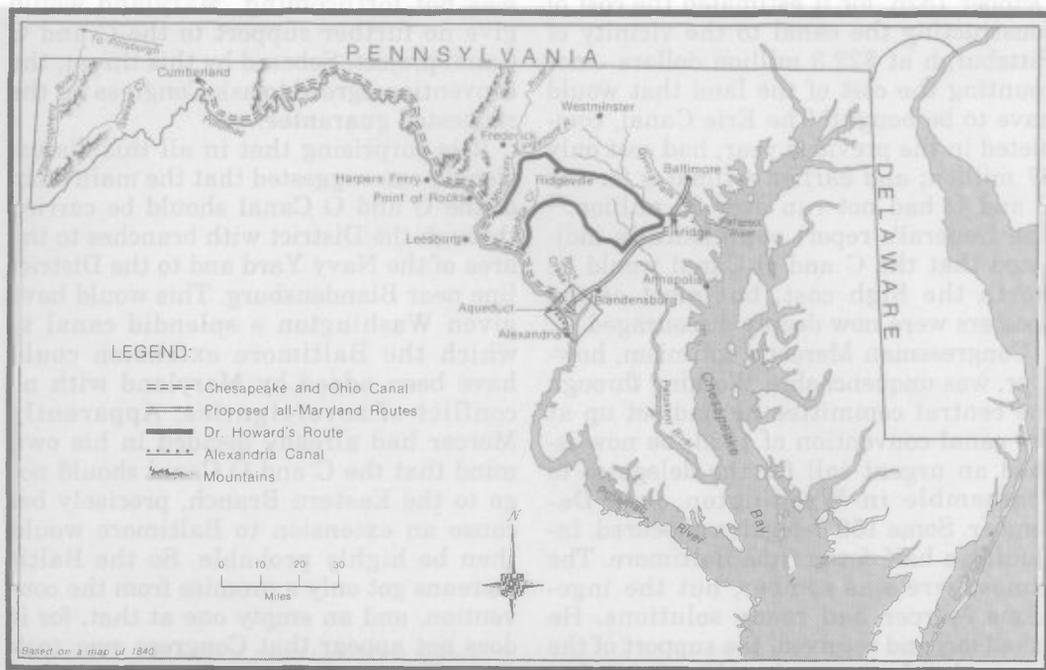


FIGURE 1. Proposed Maryland Canal Routes.

From here (said Dr. Howard) the canal could readily be carried around to any desired point on the inner or outer harbor. He observed that Washington would be well served by a branch from this canal running south to the Navy Yard and adjacent wharves at the mouth of the Eastern branch. The basic requirement for the whole plan (he noted) was that the C and O Canal at Georgetown be at least twenty-five to thirty feet above tide on the Potomac.²⁴

Despite Howard's enthusiasm, his report had a negative effect: by downplaying the "all-Maryland" routes it deeply discouraged many Baltimoreans who were willing to pay for a branch canal but not if it ran through the District.

Another development worked dramatically in the same direction. Following up on the suggestion in President Monroe's annual message of 1823, Mercer was able to get the assignment of a team of federal engineers under General Simon Bernard to survey the best route for the entire C and O Canal and to make a firm estimate of cost. The latter turned out to be sensational when it was released in October 1826, for it estimated the cost of constructing the canal to the vicinity of Pittsburgh at \$22.3 million dollars—not counting the cost of the land that would have to be bought! The Erie Canal, completed in the previous year, had cost only \$7 million; and earlier estimates for the C and O had not run over \$5 million.²⁵ The General's report optimistically indicated that the C and O Canal would be worth the high cost, but most of the boosters were now deeply discouraged.

Congressman Mercer's optimism, however, was unquenchable. Working through the central committee he had set up at the canal convention of 1823, he now issued an urgent call for the delegates to reassemble in Washington on 6 December. Some 150 delegates appeared, including a half dozen from Baltimore. The atmosphere was somber, but the ingenious Mercer had ready solutions. He asked for, and received, the support of the convention for two actions he proposed to take: (1) request that a new cost estimate

be made by civil, not military, engineers, and (2) lobby Congress for a large subscription to the canal company stock as soon as it was offered for sale.²⁶

The delegates from Baltimore came with a purpose of their own. They were friends of the canal project, but they knew that they could only win support for the Baltimore extension if they could take home an explicit guarantee that the charter of the C and O Canal Company would be modified to permit the Maryland Canal Company to condemn land and to operate a canal within the District of Columbia. Mercer and several other speakers contended that Maryland already had that right in principle and that no amendment of the charter was necessary. They pointed out, however, that Maryland could not expect that the federal government would promise in advance to give up its sovereign rights in the District. Benjamin Howard, a member of the Maryland Assembly and principal spokesman for the Baltimoreans, insisted that the general right to build a branch canal did not apply specifically to the District of Columbia, and he flatly stated that if the requested guarantee was not forthcoming, Maryland would give no further support to the C and O Canal project. Sobered by this threat, the convention agreed to ask Congress for the requested guarantee.

It is surprising that in all this discussion no one suggested that the main stem of the C and O Canal should be carried through the District with branches to the area of the Navy Yard and to the District line near Blandensburg. This would have given Washington a splendid canal to which the Baltimore extension could have been added by Maryland with no conflict of sovereignties. Apparently Mercer had already decided in his own mind that the C and O Canal should not go to the Eastern Branch, precisely because an extension to Baltimore would then be highly probable. So the Baltimoreans got only a promise from the convention, and an empty one at that, for it does not appear that Congress ever took any action on the subject.

In Baltimore the reports of Dr. Howard

and General Bernard, together with the luke-warm attitude of the convention regarding Baltimore's plea, produced a serious rethinking of the whole situation. With costs anywhere near as high as the Army engineers' estimate, the C and O Canal would probably never cross the mountains, in which event it would be of little value to Baltimore, which had its eye on the great trade potential of the Ohio Valley. Baltimore's road connection to the west was still the best, but it was being threatened by three other canals: the Erie—now completed and profitable beyond expectation; the Ohio and Erie—begun in 1825 to join Portsmouth on the Ohio to the lake at Cleveland; and the Pennsylvania Main Line—started on July 4, 1826 to connect Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, using carts on rails to take the boats over the worst of the mountains. Since the cost of freight by wagon was at least ten times that by canal, Baltimore was likely to lose most of the western trade to the ports of New York and Philadelphia.

These were the grim prospects that led to a meeting of Baltimore businessmen in February 1827, when it was decided to take a gamble on untried technology—a road of rails on which horses (hopefully) could pull cars faster than a canal boat could be towed or a wagon could be driven.²⁷ Some day there might even be a successful steam locomotive. (A small but serviceable locomotive was on the tracks as early as 1831, to everyone's surprise).

The decision in favor of the railroad, on which construction began in 1828, greatly reduced the chances that a branch canal would ever be built to Baltimore, but enthusiasts continued to raise the question in the Maryland Assembly for many years. Additional surveys were made for a possible "all-Maryland" route, but the engineers always came back with the conclusion that the route across the District of Columbia was the best.²⁸ So, no action was ever taken.

Late in 1827 the civil engineers came in with a report cutting General Bernard's estimate of canal cost in half. Years later it would be painfully apparent that the Army engineers, knowing

all about cost overruns, had been much closer to the truth, but at the time there was again joy on the Potomac. Early in 1828 the C and O Canal Company was organized with Mercer as president and a board of directors representing the federal government and the three District cities. The largest subscribers to canal stock were the United States government and Washington City, each of which signed up for a million dollars. The place chosen for the ground-breaking was a clearing alongside the old Patowmack Company's canal around the Little Falls—a symbolic indication that the new company aimed to fulfill the dream of the Founding Father. The spot had another advantage for President Mercer and his directors: It was in Maryland (just over the District line) and thus gave no indication of where the canal was to come down to tidewater. Furthermore it was standard practice in digging a new canal to begin somewhere in the middle so that construction teams could work in opposite directions. The explosive question had again been dodged, but not for long.

After the 4 July ceremony digging began—but only in the upstream direction. Toward the end of the month the Washington City Council anxiously requested the mayor to ask the canal company "to mark out with as little delay as possible the route of such of said Canal, as passes through this city to the Eastern Branch. . . ." The company's answer was prompt but evasive: The president and directors believed that it "would be inexpedient to expend any part of the capital stock of the company on an extension of that canal below . . . the Little Falls of the Potomac before the line of canal leading thence to the mouth of the Shenandoah River has been put under contract."²⁹

The Washington City authorities and stockholders hit the ceiling. No word of such a policy had hitherto been expressed by Mercer or any of the directors, so the answer came as a rude shock. The mouth of the Shenandoah at Harpers Ferry was fifty-five miles from where the canal was starting. What was worse, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company had ob-

tained an injunction prohibiting the canal from entering the narrow ledge along the river at Point of Rocks (thirteen miles below Harpers Ferry) until the conflicting claim of the railroad to a right-of-way could be settled. All of this meant that if Mercer's ruling was allowed to stand, it would be years before the lower part of the canal was completed into the District of Columbia. The Washington City authorities (who had not yet paid up their million-dollar subscription) insisted that the question of the eastern terminus be settled promptly and by the stockholders. Mercer caved in and scheduled a special stockholders meeting for 10 September. Animosities were surfacing rapidly, for no one doubted that large fortunes were at stake.

Washington City already had a canal of sorts. This was a shallow waterway originally planned by Major Charles L'Enfant, running from the Tiber Creek estuary (approximately 17th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W.) to the foot of Capitol Hill and then to the Navy Yard and wharves on the Eastern Branch. The canal was finally carried to completion in 1815 under the supervision of Latrobe, who had to make the best of a poor location and an impecunious company that would only pay for lockwalls of wood. Despite his warning, they were never replaced with stone, and the canal was badly silted up within a few years.³⁰ This annoying problem would be solved for the Washington City Council if the bigger and better C and O Canal would cross the District north of Capitol Hill to the Eastern Branch, presumably on the good route surveyed by Dr. Howard.

Alexandrians were bitterly opposed to having the C and O Company spend large sums of money to carry the new canal through Georgetown and Washington, unless the company built an aqueduct across the Potomac to bring a branch canal to Alexandria harbor. If the company would not do this, then they would prefer to see the new canal terminate like the old one at Locks Cove, about two miles above Georgetown.

Georgetown merchants wanted the new

canal to end in their town, presumably near the wharves, but none of the engineering surveys showed where the canal would come down to tidewater. One plan had the canal stopping at the western boundary of the town; the other sketched it in as far as the market house. Both plans were intentionally left incomplete with respect to a Georgetown terminus, and the conclusion is inescapable that Mercer wanted it that way so as to retain all his options as long as possible.

There was one off-beat group in Georgetown that wanted the canal to end at Locks Cove. These were conservative, prosperous gentlemen, led by Francis Scott Key, who were vigorously opposed to having the dirty canal with its noisy traffic invade their tidy town. They particularly feared that the dreaded "autumnal fevers" that plagued the upper Potomac would be brought into Georgetown by canal water. They undoubtedly remembered with concern the violence that had broken out among labor gangs working for the old Patowmack Company. As stockholders they also objected to the very large amounts that the company would have to pay for a right-of-way into or through the built-up area of Georgetown. Behind this objection, however, lurked the fact that several of these proto-environmentalists, notably Mr. Key, owned cherished property that ran down toward the river and would probably be condemned by the canal company. Lawyer Key had bought one share of canal stock, which served as his entry ticket to the stockholders meeting on September 10.³¹

In anticipation of this fateful meeting, which threatened to break up the company, Mercer appointed a committee of three directors—one from each District city—to study the problem of the eastern terminus in consultation with the engineers who he knew had some ideas on the subject. The engineers were fully aware of the contending factions, but they also had technical considerations of their own. They realized, better than the politicians, businessmen, and environmentalists, that a canal, to be successful, had to ter-

minate in a capacious, protected harbor where canal boats could tie up in close proximity to wagons and ships. The Georgetown-Washington shore of the Potomac in the 1820s offered no such harbor (the present Washington channel, protected by Hains Point, was not constructed until the 1890s). The engineers all agreed that the best location for the terminus would be at deep water on the Eastern Branch or in Baltimore harbor. Neither of these seemed to be politically feasible, but the engineers—in order to preserve the option—insisted on running the canal through Georgetown at the high level of thirty feet above the river. Then came the ingenious compromise: Instead of crossing Rock Creek on an aqueduct, canal boats would descend through four locks to an artificial harbor formed by raising the creek to a level three feet above high tide. This would be done by closing what was then the wide, shallow mouth of Rock Creek by a structure 1,080 feet long, of which two hundred feet on the Washington side would be a “tumbling dam” over which excess water from the basin would flow into the river. The remaining 880 feet would be a solid earthen promontory, averaging 120 feet in width, jutting out from the Georgetown side of the creek. Since this man-made peninsula could be built from the rock and soil of the canal ditch to be cut through Georgetown, its cost would be slight while its long-term value to the company would be considerable. The “mole,” as they called it in French style, would be fitted out with wharves on both sides—for ships on the Potomac, for canal boats in the Rock Creek basin. To facilitate the exchange of cargoes, the canal company would lease lots on the mole to shippers and canalers for warehouses, work shops, and stables. The tip of the mole, next to the tumbling dam, would be sliced by a tide-lock, allowing canal boats and other small craft to pass at any time in either direction between canal and river. There would be a bridge over the tumbling dam so that the mole would be as accessible to Washington as to Georgetown.³² In this way (thought the

engineers) the two rivals would be neatly served by one terminus, and the canal company would make an added profit from its man-made harbor.

The committee adopted the engineers' plan and placated Alexandrians by recommending an aqueduct across the Potomac for a branch canal to the Alexandria harbor. The committee's report even contained the assurance for the Georgetown environmentalists that the canal through town would be cleanly walled with stone and would have enough current to avoid stagnation.

The report was accepted by Mercer and the board of directors on 3 September and was made available to the three municipalities. The Georgetown government did not complain. Alexandrians requested only that the canal company support their plea to Congress for assistance in building the huge aqueduct. The Washington authorities, however, complained bitterly that the natural and proper terminus of the canal was on the Eastern Branch where there was deep water for ocean shipping. If the company would not do this, then it should at least run a branch canal from the Rock Creek basin around to the Tiber estuary where it would connect with Washington's existing canal. Mercer agreed to the latter proposal, provided that the city would construct a basin at the Tiber estuary three feet above high tide, i.e., at the same level as the proposed Rock Creek basin. The committee's proposal, as thus modified, was hotly debated by the stockholders on 10 and 17 September, at which time it was finally accepted by a large majority over the unyielding objections of the Georgetown environmentalists.³³

Three years later, on 19 September, the first packet boat on the canal—the *Charles Fenton Mercer*—proceeded ceremoniously through the Georgetown locks down to the Rock Creek basin. According to a Georgetown reporter, hundreds of cheering spectators reflected “the joy that was felt on the successful completion of the great work, which we anticipate is to bring wealth and prosperity to our long-languishing town.”³⁴ The C and O Canal

finally had a tidewater terminus, but the golden deluge did not follow.

Rock Creek did not willingly submit to the engineers' plan. With a dam across its mouth, the creek dumped tons of silt in the basin, which required frequent dredging even for shallow canal boats. The water on the river side of the mole was not deep enough for ocean-going ships; only coastal sloops and schooners could be accommodated. Thus the inadequacy of the Rock Creek terminus placed a severe limitation on canal commerce right from the start.

There was the possibility that the outlet at deep water on the Eastern Branch would be an improvement, and with this hope the Washington municipal government took over the city canal in 1831 and had it dredged and repaired. Two years later, when the C and O Company completed the short connecting canal to the Tiber estuary, it was possible for canal boats to proceed from the Rock Creek basin to deep water near the Navy Yard. Unfortunately the Washington city canal, despite the renovation, soon developed its old troubles—siltation and rotting lock timbers. The amount of traffic was not great enough to justify another expensive repair job on what was fundamentally a poorly built canal in an unsuitable terrain. When the C and O Canal reached Cumberland in 1850, the coal trade into and across Washington should have been a major item, but by this time, the city canal had greatly deteriorated, and within a few years it became impassable. There were no riches there.

The Alexandria Canal Company was chartered in 1830, but it was not until June 1832 that its plea for financial assistance came before Congress. Jealous Georgetowners immediately sent Congress a "memorial" arguing against the bill, unless the proposed aqueduct carried a free bridge. This provoked a sharp cannonade from big guns of the Senate. Daniel Webster of Massachusetts called this maneuver "an ungracious attempt to defeat a measure for the interests of Alexandria, which had been the most abstemious of all the cities of the District in

her demands on the General Government." Senator Samuel Foote of Connecticut expressed his annoyance that "whenever applications were made from any part of this District for aid from the Government, there was always some opposing interest interposing itself to embarrass the legislation of Congress." Senator L. W. Tazewell of Virginia said that the idea of combining a free bridge with the aqueduct had actually originated with Alexandria, which "at one time had proposed a co-operation with Georgetown to accomplish it, which was refused by Georgetown." Henry Clay of Kentucky "defended Georgetown against the imputation thrown out by the argument of the gentleman from Virginia. He [The Great Compromiser] was in favor of the aqueduct, of the free bridge also, and of printing the memorial."³⁵

Charles Mercer, speaking as a congressman, supported the Alexandrian request, emphasizing for the first time the importance of a deep-water terminus: "[C and O Canal cargoes] must be subjected to a heavy percentage for transshipment, unless the canal should give them access to the only port [Alexandria] where they could meet the shipping in which they were to be carried abroad."³⁶ This cogent point was supported by several other speakers, but no one thought to point out that Baltimore was a far better port and commercial center than Alexandria and that an extension canal from the District to the Patapsco had already been surveyed and would cost far less than the immense aqueduct across the Potomac plus a seven-mile canal paralleling a thoroughly navigable stretch of river.³⁷ The advantages of a deep-water harbor, however, were demonstrated by the fact that when the Alexandria extension was finally finished in 1844, it quickly became the preferred outlet for the C and O Canal, a position that was lost with the outbreak of civil war.

After the war, when the coal trade from Cumberland was at its height, the inadequacy of the Rock Creek basin became acute. Boats were frequently lined up for a mile through Georgetown, waiting their turn through the locks or waiting

for the basin to be made navigable by the new steam dredge. The Georgetown coal companies found a make-shift way around this traffic jam by building trestles out from the canal over their wharves on the river some thirty feet below. Coal was off-loaded from canal boats into carts which ran out on the trestles and dumped the coal down onto the wharves, from which it was shoveled into the holds of waiting ships and barges. The trouble with this short-cut was that it increased the congestion along the south bank of the canal in the center of Georgetown and substantially pulverized the coal.³⁸

In desperation the canal company contracted in 1872 for a new set of outlet locks to be built about a mile upstream from Georgetown. These locks, however, were never built because the chief engineer persuaded the company to accept his design for a mechanical incline that would convey loaded canal boats down to the river faster than locks and with less loss of water. The unwieldy canal boats would then have to be floated down the open river to Georgetown or beyond, but this was thought better than to be stuck in the Rock Creek bottleneck. The ingenious invention worked well for about a year, when a cable-break killed three men and plunged a loaded boat into the river. The incline was repaired but its popularity was understandably diminished.³⁹

In the long run of the nineteenth century, railroads obviously supplanted almost all inland canals in the United States, the Erie Canal being one of the few that not only survived but regularly turned in an impressive profit. Oddly enough, the C and O Canal also survived into the twentieth century, but it was on welfare all the way. It was started largely by federal and state purchases of stock on which it never paid a dividend. From 1836 to bankruptcy in 1890, it was kept alive by massive infusions of cash from the state of Maryland. In its final and most inglorious stage it was supported by the B and O, which feared that another

railroad might buy up the canal for its right-of-way.

Professor Sanderlin concluded that the basic reason for the failure of the canal was its inability to establish a "through trade" with the West, as the Erie Canal had succeeded in doing.⁴⁰ This is doubtless true, but we need to push the argument back a bit. What made the canal so unprofitable—right from the start—that by the time it reached Cumberland in 1850, all thought of carrying in on to the headwaters of the Ohio had completely disappeared? Many factors contributed: cost overruns, shortages and high cost of labor, epidemic illnesses among the workers, floods, delays and expenses caused by court battles over land rights. Railroad competition appears to have been minimal in the early decades. Of course, all canals quickly lost passenger traffic to the speedy railroads as the latter attained reliability in the late 1830s; but the canals maintained a tremendous cost advantage over the railroads in the transport of bulky, heavy goods where speed was not a major consideration. It was in this type of trade that the Erie Canal and its enlarged version, the New York State Barge Canal, continued to turn in a handsome profit for a century against the stiff competition of the New York Central Railroad and its predecessors whose tracks paralleled the canal from Albany to Buffalo. The C and O had no such direct railroad competition because it was not until 1868 that the B and O completed its line from Washington to Point of Rocks where it joined the old line to Cumberland and points west. There was some price competition in the haulage of flour from Harpers Ferry, but in the coal business the railroad actually helped the canal for two years (1843–1845) by hauling coal at two cents a ton per mile from Cumberland to the head of navigation on the canal, which was then fifty miles from Cumberland. When the railroad discontinued this arrangement, it stated that the canal trade was too small to bother with.⁴¹ The figures are interesting: In 1850 the canal carried only 7,956 tons of coal, while the railroad hauled 148,000 tons, of which

125,000 tons went to 697 ships at the B and O's wharves at Locust Point in Baltimore harbor.⁴² The canal rate on coal to Washington was only one-quarter cent per ton/mile, whereas the B and O rate to Baltimore was 1.5 cents per ton/mile. The same disparity persisted even after the canal was well established at the coal wharf in Cumberland. For the five years from 1855 through 1859 the canal carried 1,072,560 tons of coal, while the B and O hauled 2,218,357 tons—despite the great price differential in favor of the canal.⁴³ Obviously the canal was suffering—not from railroad competition—but from a limited demand for coal in the District of Columbia.

The commercial limitations of the District seem never to have been considered by Congressman Mercer and his associates who assumed that any well-built canal would duplicate the profitability of the Erie. Any thoughtful market analysis would have revealed enormous differences in the eastern termini of the two waterways. The Erie serviced not just Albany but New York City, for canal boats and barges were regularly rafted together and towed up and down the Hudson river.⁴⁴ In 1830 Albany and New York had a combined population 4.5 times that of the District of Columbia and incomparably better port facilities and shipping connections.

Baltimore was the only possible eastern terminus for the C and O Canal that offered population, industry, capital, and shipping facilities at all comparable to those that brought such success to the Erie Canal. In comparison with the District's so-called "cities," Baltimore was a giant among dwarfs, its population being more than twice that of the entire District of Columbia in 1830. The shipping figures are even more startling: for the fiscal year ending in September 1829 the total tonnage of vessels entering and departing Baltimore harbor was almost five times the figure for Georgetown and Alexandria combined. The permanent registered tonnage engaged in foreign trade was even more lopsided: the figure for Baltimore was 58,061 as against 5,801

for Alexandria and Georgetown together.⁴⁵

The able engineers who designed the C and O Canal were all convinced of the value to the canal of having its eastern terminus in Baltimore harbor. Isaac Briggs, the engineer who worked with the joint commission of 1822, assumed that the canal would go to Baltimore. In an address which he made in the summer of 1823 as part of the campaign to obtain Maryland approval of the canal company's charter, Briggs said enthusiastically, "From Pittsburg to Washington and Baltimore, the whole line of canal will be a chain of beautiful and flourishing villages."⁴⁶ Dr. William Howard, who had surveyed the Bladensburg route to Baltimore, was an outspoken advocate of extending the canal to the city on the Patapsco. The report of General Bernard and his engineers pointed out that the high elevation they recommended for the waterway through Georgetown was designed to make possible an extension of the canal "to Washington and in the direction of Baltimore." In 1829 the C and O Canal's board of three eminent engineers endorsed the plan to hold the canal to a high level through Georgetown: "... we never had a doubt of the propriety of bringing the highest possible level from the head of the Little Falls to Georgetown . . . in order to assure its continuance on the same level towards Baltimore or to the Navy Yard; either of which projects are of great importance, and probably will be executed before many years."⁴⁷ In 1837 the city engineer of Baltimore reported that Dr. Howard's route was the best and cheapest way to bring the canal to Baltimore, and he emphasized again the advantages of the port of Baltimore over the District cities up the shallow, winding Potomac.⁴⁸

Congressman Mercer and his associates turned a deaf ear to this good advice, hoping to keep the canal's "riches" within the District of Columbia. As events were to show, it was the canal that needed Baltimore, not the other way round. By failing to go to the Chesapeake, the canal lost its chance for a

booming trade that might have given it the strength to reach the Ohio.

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The Montgomery County Agricultural Society: The Beginning Years, 1846–1850

GEORGE M. ANDERSON, S.J.

IN 1980 A DOCUMENT OF UNUSUAL INTEREST appeared in an antiquarian bookshop in the Georgetown section of Washington, D.C.: the minutes of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society.¹ Three ledgers containing them were subsequently purchased and donated to the Montgomery County Historical Society.

Few such records of the proceedings of county agricultural societies in nineteenth century Maryland have survived, and the early proceedings of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society are of special note because they provide a first-hand account of the precarious state of Montgomery County agriculture in the 1840s. The impoverishment of the area's once-rich soil through unrelenting cultivation of tobacco and corn in earlier decades resulted in a declining population; families had begun to migrate west in search of still-fertile ground.² Moreover, since agriculture was at the heart of virtually every aspect of the county's life, the minutes also contain information on matters that extend well beyond the subject of farming itself. Descriptions of the yearly fairs—or exhibitions, as they were also called—shed much light on social and cultural features of the time, including the position of women.

For the first twenty-three years the painstakingly neat and even handwriting was that of William Veirs Bouic (1817–1896), who served as recording secretary from the society's inception in June 1846 until 1869. Admitted to the bar in 1840, Bouic was appointed states attorney in

1849, and in 1867 became a judge of the sixth judicial circuit, a position he held for fifteen years.³ A leader in Montgomery County during the nineteenth century, he was a man of education and means. Such, too, were others active in the early society. Of particular prominence was the first president, John Parke Custis Peter (1799–1848). A great grandson of George Washington, he was elected in 1826 to the Maryland House of Delegates. His winter home was Tudor Place in Georgetown; in the summer he took up residence at Montevideo, his estate near Big Seneca Creek, the dividing line between the Medley and the Rockville election districts.⁴ Peter's wealth and lineage undoubtedly counted for much in his being selected as first president of the society. Its constitution described the various officers, the manner of election, and the term of office, as follows:

A President, five Vice-Presidents [one for each election district], a Corresponding Secretary, a Recording Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Executive Committee, shall be selected by ballot, by a majority of the members of the Society then present, to continue in office for the term of one year, and until their successors are appointed.⁵

Meetings were to be held quarterly, with the principal meeting to take place annually in conjunction with the agricultural exhibition on the second Thursday of September. The board of the society—composed of the president and the five vice presidents—had as its duty to “consider maturely the chief defects in the agricultural systems of the county, and recommend such changes as will . . . conduce to the immediate, and permanent im-

Father Anderson's articles on Montgomery County have appeared in the 1980, 1981, 1983, and 1984 issues of the *MHM*.

provement of husbandry.”⁶ “Defects” alluded to the outmoded and wasteful farming methods that had caused the county’s decline in population.

These methods the society hoped to change. Edward Stabler (1794–1883) of Sandy Spring, a Quaker active in the society’s affairs, provided a shining example of how to rejuvenate depleted soil. He spoke of his accomplishment in a letter printed in the July, 1847 *American Farmer*. Soils around Sandy Spring, he wrote,

like most of the lands in this section, had been worn out or greatly impoverished by the ‘old Maryland plan’ of raising alternate crops of corn and tobacco; and what little fertility was left in it, after the Tobacco culture ceased (because the land was too poor to produce remunerating crops any more) was, by a long course of tenantry pretty well used up. This was certainly the case with my farm of little over 100 acres.⁷

Stabler described how, by careful use of fertilizers over a period of years, the productivity of his hundred-acre farm had been restored and enhanced. For the most part he used lime, but with it he combined what he referred to as “highly concentrated and bought manures.”⁸ Of these, the most important was guano, made from the droppings of seabirds. It had been introduced into the Sandy Spring section of Montgomery County only three years before, in 1844.⁹ The Stabler family was in the forefront of those who promoted the use of guano in the area.¹⁰ Edward’s brother, Caleb Stabler (1799–1883) also published a letter in the *American Farmer* about the same time. Addressed to John Parke Custis Peter, it described an 1845 experiment with Peruvian guano on his own farm, with results similar to those Edward achieved:

In 1845 I sowed broadcast, 260 pounds of Peruvian guano on one acre of my corn land, just after the plough, and harrowed and rolled the ground at once, which was immediately before a rain. It needed no stakes, as the growth showed its whereabouts throughout the season; and when the corn was husked, we thought there

was nearly double the quantity on that acre that there was on the adjoining one, of similar quantity before being guanoed.¹¹

Successful experiments of this kind led to a mood of optimism among the society’s early leaders. Minutes of the first meetings demonstrated a sense of excitement and a belief that a turning point had been reached. At one the secretary read aloud a portion of a letter from Thomas Blagden¹² of Washington. So enthusiastic was Blagden after attending the first fair that he wished to enroll himself as a member and also his small son, Silliman Blagden, of whom he wrote:

He was too young to be with me at your Fair [of September, 1846], and will be, probably, to be at several of your coming ones. But I wish him to know as soon as he can, that he is a member of an Agricultural Society, and thereby, I hope, the more easily inclined to the acquisition of a love for agricultural things, and pursuits—believing, as I do, that if he can acquire a fondness, and taste for, and follow, a farmer’s life, it will be the happiest one he can lead.¹³

Conscious that publicity would be helpful in attracting additional new members, the society in 1847 called on Rockville newspapers and the *American Farmer* to print its proceedings.¹⁴ As an incentive, the society offered newspapers a fee of five dollars. Especially in the society’s beginning years, the *American Farmer* obliged with coverage that was sometimes extensive and always positive.¹⁵ The note of encouragement shone distinctly in an account of the first exhibition:

We publish with much pleasure the proceedings of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society held at Rockville on the 10th ult., which, we learn from a correspondent, was a very spirited affair, considering the very limited time which was allowed for preparation. We hope the Society, now they have made a beginning, will persevere in so noble a cause.¹⁶

The “spirited affair,” according to the society’s minutes for 10 September 1846, was attended by a crowd of between 1,500 and 2,000 people.

Besides viewing exhibits, the gathering listened to what was described as "an instructive, learned, and elegant lecture" by Professor Benjamin Hollowell of the Alexandria Boarding School.¹⁷ Hollowell owned a farm in the neighborhood of Sandy Spring, where he retired after his school closed in 1858.¹⁸ Like the Stabler brothers, he contributed often to the *American Farmer*.¹⁹ So well was Hollowell received in 1846 that he was invited back to speak at the following year's exhibition.

Hollowell declined, and the choice fell upon a former student, William H. Farquhar (1813–1887), another Quaker from Sandy Spring.²⁰ Farquhar served as chairman of the society's Committee on Agricultural Education; he, like Hollowell, believed in the need for better instruction in agricultural matters. In the spring of 1847 Farquhar's committee issued a report stressing this viewpoint:

The time has come when the subject of Agricultural Education, should occupy a prominent place in the arrangements that are made for the instructions of our youth. We believe there is no class of people who so imperatively demand an Education adapted to the nature of their pursuits, as the sons of farmers, and that nowhere else can education be made to yield such valuable fruits.²¹

The report went on to call for the establishment of agricultural schools, or at least "the introduction into our common schools of text-books for instruction in Scientific Agriculture." Farquhar and his committee knew that enthusiasm and esprit de corps, essential to the life of the new organization, could not themselves accomplish the society's goals. Only education could save Montgomery County agriculture—yet early leaders faced an uphill climb. William Brewer, president of the Medley (third election) District agricultural society, wrote the *American Farmer* in early 1848 that too many farmers in the area were "illiterate, each pulling his own way, without plan or combinations, having no fixed purpose or object in view."²²

The minutes of the first exhibition of 10 September 1846, include a list of the

competitors who received—as preliminary versions of later prizes of value—certificates of excellence. The certificates were awarded in livestock, agricultural implements, and household manufactures. John Parke Custis Peter received certificates of excellence for the best ewes and the handsomest Durham cows and heifers. It is not surprising that the land holdings of an affluent planter like Peter should have been matched with prize-winning livestock. The same could be said of another winner at the first exhibition, Allen Bowie Davis (1809–1889), whose 1,000 acre farm, Greenwood, was located near Triadelphia in the upper part of the county.²³ The census for 1850 assigned Davis's assets in real estate alone a value of \$45,000. By the time of the third exhibition of September 1848, Davis had succeeded Peters, who had died in January, as president, of the society.²⁴

The third exhibition was considerably more elaborate than the first two. The account of it in the minutes includes a description of the actual location, which helps present-day readers to visualize the scene. There were, in fact, two locations. Livestock was exhibited in several adjoining vacant lots owned by Jane Elizabeth Beall²⁵ at the western part of Rockville, along what is now West Montgomery Avenue near the Great Falls Road;²⁶ the rest of the exhibition was held in the center of Rockville, at the court house—outside and inside alike:

The public square surrounding the court house was covered with displays of agricultural implements. The right wing of the court house was kindly tendered by the Register of Wills to the committee on household manufactures. This exhibited the skill, industry, and taste of the ladies who encourage our enterprise. . . . The County Clerk also kindly permitted the committee on Fruit and vegetables, to arrange the same in his office. The display was truly tempting to the eyes of all lovers of good fruit.²⁷

The full cooperation of public officials, even to the point of allowing their offices to be given over to displays of fruits, vegetables, and "household manufactures," underscored the extent to which the so-

ciety's annual exhibition dominated town life in mid-September of each year.

The very courtroom was brought into use as the site for the annual address to the members, given in 1848 by a prominent Montgomery County lawyer, Richard Johns Bowie (1807–1881), who had been chosen as “orator of the day.”²⁸ An abundance of flowers was arranged in such a way as to soften the courtroom's somber aspect:

The court room was the place appointed for the delivery of the oration. This was rendered gay with flowers arranged with exquisite skill and taste. None who were there could have failed to observe it, and none will readily forget the pleasing effect.²⁹

Seated near Richard Johns Bowie were several other prominent Marylanders, including Major George Peter (1779–1861), who introduced the speaker to the assembled members. Major Peter was another wealthy landowner; his estate, Montanverde, was located near Darnestown. Earlier in the century he had served in the U.S. House of Representatives from the Sixth District.³⁰

As well known as Major Peter would have been to all in the courtroom, the most renowned person in the group near the speaker's stand was undoubtedly a man not from Montgomery County, but from Prince George's: Colonel Horace Capron (1804–1885). A manufacturer on a large scale, Colonel Capron was also an agriculturalist with a special interest in restoring worn-out soil. Just a year before, in 1847, he had contributed to the *American Farmer* an article entitled “On the Renovation of Worn-Out Land.”³¹

While still a young man, Capron moved from New York State to Laurel, where he started his successful cotton mill operation.³² By the mid-1840s, two thousand employees lived in the houses he had had constructed nearby, forming what was in effect a self-contained community with its own schoolhouse and churches. The community was known as Laurel Factory. In admiring terms, a correspondent for the *American Farmer* who visited there noted that behind his own “mansion house,” Colonel Capron

has erected fifty blocks of two story stone houses, each competent for four families. To each of these is attached a vegetable garden in the rear, with a beautiful yard in front, tastefully laid out in parterres of flowers. These houses accommodate a population of 2000 souls, all of whom derive support from Col. Capron's factory, where from 700 to 800 find constant and lucrative employment, a large portion of whom are females. . . . Col. Capron has erected a school-house, which he has provided at his own expense with a competent teacher. . . . A Catholic chapel, and a Methodist Meeting House, have been erected by him, which are well attended on the Sabbath. . . . The monthly payroll of the establishment amounts to between 8 and 9,000 dollars.³³

In addition to the mill and the community, there was a farming operation that was described three years later when the correspondent made another visit. Nearly half of the fifteen hundred acres of the farm had been, only a decade before, “exhausted old fields which, by a course of improvident culture, had been deprived of their every element of fertility.”³⁴ Looking at the same fields in their improved state, the writer concluded:

We doubt much, where there is [sic] half a dozen instances in our State, where so much land, in so short a period has ever been improved by a single individual, and we doubt still more, whether the fertilization has ever been so thorough and complete before.³⁵

Besides serving as an honored guest,³⁶ Capron brought specimens of his own livestock for display on Beall's lots. The following day, after a plowing match, he received a cash premium that he immediately donated toward the following year's household-manufacture prizes.

Awards, rather than certificates of excellence alone, came into use at the exhibition of 1847, when the society distributed cash premiums totalling \$150. These awards—gold coins in 1850—shed light on what Montgomery County farmers considered of special importance in the period. Not surprisingly, prizes for horses head the early lists of premiums.³⁷ In 1847 the prize for the best stallion was

\$5.00. By the following year, it had doubled and the stallion awards included a premium of \$3.00 for the best horse younger than four years. In 1849 the executive committee decided that prizes should go to the best bull and best ram of foreign breed. Awards for imported stock reflected the interests of men like Davis and Capron, who could afford to spend large sums for cattle intended as much for show as for breeding. In a brief "Notice of Col. Capron's Stock" the *American Farmer* of 1848 noted that

the celebrated red Durham cow, Gledhow, now owned by Col. Capron, of Laurel Factory, Md., a portrait of which is presented in this No., was bred by Jos. Burton, of Chester Co., Pa., who imported his dam. His sire, Yorkshireman, was from the herd of Mr. Bates, or Kirkleavington, England, and imported by Jos. Cope, of Chester Co., Pa.³⁸

Despite the value of imported animals, however, the society that year decided to award prizes "only to stock raised, and owned in Montgomery County, and in the District of Columbia."³⁹

Judges of farming implements, too, commended articles made in the county itself, even if they did not win premiums. The minutes of 14 September 1849 observe that among implements worthy of attention was a plow "made by the Messers McCauley of Brook[e]ville designed especially for deepworking of vegetables."⁴⁰ Similarly, a Mr. Rosendorf won a prize "for his display of combs manufactured in this county by himself."⁴¹ Prizes for agricultural implements reflected a desire on the part of the society to promote the development of ever-more efficient farming tools that would, in turn, aid in achieving the overall goal of increasing agricultural productivity. Development of the mechanical arts, as they were referred to, accordingly came in for particular mention when in the fall of 1847 Farquhar moved

that in the opinion of this Society the encouragement of the Mechanical Arts is an object of great importance to the agriculturalist, and that, in order to promote this object and to enlist the mechanics of

the county in the advancement of the common cause, premiums should be offered for the best axe, horseshoe, or other similar article, the workmanship of the mechanics of our county.⁴²

In preparation for the second exhibition of 8-9 September 1847, the executive committee, having voted to award a premium of \$20.00 for the best display of agricultural implements, decided to invite dealers from the Baltimore area as well as from the District of Columbia. At the 1847 fair the society presented a \$10 silver goblet as a prize "for the highest improvement of a lot of land, not less than two acres," and another one, worth half as much, as second prize. Competitors had to provide evidence of the before-and-after state of their two acres or more, indicating as well the type, quantity, and cost of the "artificial means"—commercial fertilizers like guano—which had been employed. The winners of the silver goblets unfortunately did not appear in the minutes, which described little of that year's fair except to observe that "there was an unusual concourse of persons, and many new members were added."⁴³

At one fair, at least, books were also included as premiums. The minutes for August 1849 state that, besides cash prizes and the silver goblets, "it was also determined to appropriate \$75 out of the treasury to purchase books for premiums to be awarded at the coming Exhibition." Then-president Davis selected and purchased the volumes. The minutes mentioned neither titles nor the entries they were to reward, but once more one is reminded of the importance society leaders placed on teaching the farmers of Montgomery County the most effective methods of caring for their land and livestock.

By the spring of 1849 the society had found a permanent site for the annual fair. The minutes for 2 April 1849 contain the following entry: "Samuel T. Stone-street Esq. having offered to the Society the gratuitous use of his woodlot adjoining the lot of the Catholic Church as a permanent place of holding the Annual

Fairs, the society resolved to accept the offer."⁴⁴ No longer would there be a need to make use of a split location. There was now to be only one site for all the exhibits, near St. Mary's Catholic Church at the eastern end of Rockville.

A committee was appointed to examine the feasibility of erecting a six-foot fence around the Stonestreet property. But at the meeting of June 1849, the committee reported that the fence would be too costly—the estimate was \$200—and therefore recommended that the society discard the idea of a permanent enclosure. The desire for an enclosure "sufficient to exclude observation"⁴⁵ arose from a decision to charge an admission fee to those attending the annual exhibition: "The Society determined that hereafter each and every person who shall enter the enclosure during the continuance of the annual exhibition shall first procure from the Treasurer a ticket of admittance, the price of which shall be 12½ cents."⁴⁶

The admission fee decision, together with a realization that the society could not afford to fence the Stonestreet woodlot, point to an increasing preoccupation with problems of funding. Although members grew in number, they failed to pay their dues regularly. At the May 1848 meeting a resolution ordered the treasurer to call on all persons in arrears for the amount of their subscriptions.⁴⁷

The situation had become still more pressing by 1850. On 13 September of that year, a resolution directed the treasurer "to make out a list of delinquent members [and] classify them according to Election District in this County and [the] District of Columbia in which they reside."⁴⁸ The names were then to be placed in the hands of collectors, who would be paid ten percent of whatever they were able to obtain from the delinquent members. At the same meeting members decided "that in the event of a failure in collecting the funds of the Society to meet their current demands," then the treasurer might "borrow the balance on the property of the Society."⁴⁹ That property would have been the Stonestreet woodlot.

It was not merely as an act of largesse, then, that Horace Capron returned his cash premium at the fair of 1848. Others followed his lead. Otho Magruder,⁵⁰ who won the premium for the best saddlehorse at the same 1848 fair, donated his award money to the society "to increase the fund to purchase premiums for the ladies department."⁵¹

The phrase, "ladies department," acknowledged the important if subsidiary role women played from the very beginning of the society. In its congratulatory statement a month after the opening exhibition of 1846, the *American Farmer* made approving mention of the fact that the founders of the new organization were to be "aided in their labors by the countenance and support of the fairer portion of creation."⁵²

The contribution of women to the annual fairs grew rapidly, especially in the category of household manufactures. At the first exhibition only sixteen prizes were awarded for articles grouped under this heading. For the most part they were various types of homespun fabrics—blankets, counterpanes, table diaper, towelling, flannel, striped linsey, carpeting, plain linen, and yarn stockings. The list of premiums and the names of the women who won them covers a scant half page in the minutes for that date.⁵³ Three years later, in 1849, the list was much longer as well as more diverse. There were, for example, prizes not only for the more usual entries like the ones noted above, but also for items of fancy handwork, such as yarn gloves, and for displays of flowers.⁵⁴ Brief but approving mention of the women's entries was made by an *American Farmer* correspondent who visited the same 1849 exhibition:

The ladies made a most beautiful display in the department of household economy. The space allotted for their handiwork was continually crowded, and gave universal satisfaction. A number of the articles were of peculiar merit, and we were promised that they should be on exhibition at the State Fair.⁵⁵

The brevity of this notice makes it evident that women were still helpers of a secondary order. Later in the same ac-

count, the writer describes them in terms of their ornamental value:

The fair daughters of Montgomery, and some from other counties, and the city of Washington, graced it [the exhibition] with their presence in large numbers, and added much to the interest of the Fair. Seats were provided in front of the stand appropriated for the Orator of the Day, and the scene which was presented, in the radiance of beauty which was there exhibited, was calculated to make a pleasing impression upon the stranger.⁵⁶

By 1850, women for the first time made up several of the committees appointed to handle arrangements for the fair. Mrs. Richard Johns Bowie, Mrs. Lawrence A. Dawson, and Miss Ann Harding were chosen to act as a "Committee for the purchase of Premiums for the Ladies Department."⁵⁷ And yet, significantly, the secretary and "pursar" for the group was Robert Dick.⁵⁸ All administrative and financial aspects of the society's operation remained firmly in the hands of its male members, a reflection of the status of women in mid-nineteenth century Maryland. Other committees of women formed for the same 1850 fair, such as the "Committee of Ladies on Household Fabricks," the "Committee on Bread, Pickles, and Preserves," the "Committee of Ladies on Butter, Cheese, and Honey." In these instances too, a male member of the society supervised activities.⁵⁹

Descriptions of the fairs themselves in the minutes did not always provide a clear picture of the actual sequence of events. Fortunately the *American Farmer* supplied a detailed account of the fourth annual exhibition of 13-14 September 1849.⁶⁰ On the opening day, the principal events were displays of livestock and homemade articles and delivery of an opening address. That evening, members of the society gathered in the court house to hear another address intended specifically for them. The phrase the minutes generally used to describe this final phase of the opening day was adjournment "to the court house at candlelighting."⁶¹

The second day consisted largely of judging entries and distributing prizes—

and to the plowing match that was a standard feature at local agricultural fairs of the time.⁶² The match provided competitors not only with an opportunity to display their individual plowing skills, but also allowed them to demonstrate the merits of various kinds of patented implements. The 1849 prize for the best three-horse plow, for example, went to Artemus Newlin, who used "Brown's patent."⁶³ That year's award for best plowman was awarded to another of the Stabler brothers, Howard. The Stablers typified the ability of some middle class farmers in Montgomery County to combine manual skills with an advanced approach to husbandry.⁶⁴

Finally, there was the sale of cattle. Some had been brought for exhibition only, but other stock stood for sale as well as exhibition. At the 1849 fair a Mr. Bayly offered Devon cattle at auction "and realized very satisfactory prices therefore."⁶⁵ The sale of livestock as the concluding event serves as a reminder that cattle made up the center of interest at the September exhibitions. Indeed the *American Farmer* referred to the two-day gathering not as a fair or an exhibition but as a cattle show: "It is the first time we have had the opportunity of attending one of their [Montgomery County's] Cattle Shows, although we had, some years before, the pleasure of visiting the county."⁶⁶

In the course of his article the correspondent also refers to the state of the Montgomery County soil. His observation tactfully noted both progress made and the room for further improvement:

All classes of the community [in Montgomery County] seem to be alive to the importance of the subject of the renovation of their waste lands, and, notwithstanding much has been accomplished during the last few years, truly, we had the opportunity of witnessing, in our travel through the county, that much remains to be done—but with the indomitable energy which her sons have evinced, the period is not very distant when her waste fields *will* be reclaimed. . . .⁶⁷

Apart from Sandy Spring Quakers like the Stablers and Farquhar, few members of the society were more diligent in the use of fertilizer than Allen Bowie Davis. The *American Farmer* reported that Davis, in his address to the members on the evening of the first day of the 1849 exhibition, paid particular attention "to the subject of manures, the supply, and the means of obtaining it—and he alluded to the correspondence which had taken place between him and the Rail Road Co., relative to the freight charged thereupon."⁶⁸ Both the Baltimore and Washington Railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal had imposed burdensome freight charges on the transport of guano and other commercial fertilizers, driving the price beyond the reach of smaller farmers.

The problem had been a topic of discussion at the November 1848 meeting, where members resolved:

It is the opinion of this Society, that a reduction on the tolls on guano and other fertilizers by our internal improvement companies, is a matter of great importance to the agriculture of the County, and that the President of this Society be requested to communicate with companies for that end.⁶⁹

In accord with the resolution, Davis did make inquiries and his efforts bore fruit, at least with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company. Five months later he was able to report "that the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company *had* consented to reduce the toll on manures, but that the Balto. and Wash. Railroad had not yet answered his proposition to them for the same object."⁷⁰ Davis eventually prevailed upon the railroad as well. In a communication to the *American Farmer* of July 1850, Edward Stabler wrote:

Our Rail-road companies have materially reduced the freight on manures—an act of wisdom and good policy, and doubtless owing in some degree to the influence and perseverance of the worthy President of our county Society; one of the first, if not the first, to move efficiently in the reform.⁷¹

These victories and Davis's largesse gradually led to noticeable gains in Mont-

gomery farming. In 1849 Davis, willing to assist less affluent members of the society, purchased a large quantity of guano for resale to members in smaller amounts at affordable prices. The society tendered thanks at the September meeting:

Resolved, that the thanks of the Society be given to Mr. A. B. Davis for his services in purchasing for the members of the Society guano whereby about twelve hundred dollars were saved to those who purchased through him.⁷²

In November the minutes registered "much interesting conversation" about how to apply guano. A majority of farmers in attendance reported that they "sowed about 200 lbs per acre upon prepared land and shovelled in with wheat." Others "sowed the guano on the rough, then the wheat, [and] harrowed and cross harrowed the land."⁷³ What mattered above all was their perception that however applied, the result was "a fair crop of wheat . . . on land poor before the application of guano."⁷⁴

While guano was the most sought-after fertilizer in mid-nineteenth-century Montgomery County, it was not the only one in use. Chappell's Salts also enjoyed a certain popularity. Their originator, P. S. Chappell of Baltimore, advertised frequently in the *American Farmer*. In the issue for September 1850, the advertisement took the form of an open letter addressed "To the Farmers of Maryland." In the course of the letter, Chappell described the composition of the salts: "Each barrel contains as much Phosphate Lime (dissolved in Sulphuric acid) as 200 lbs Peruvian Guano, besides a full supply of Alkilies, Sulphates, Silicates, Animal Charcoal, etc."⁷⁵

Silicates, phosphates, and alkilies would probably have had little meaning to most farmers, who would have noted, however, that a barrel of Chappell's Salts contained as much phosphate lime as two hundred pounds of Peruvian guano. Clearly Chappell wanted to market his product as a viable rival to guano, of which Peruvian was considered the best.⁷⁶ Some members of the Montgomery

County Agricultural Society tried Chappell's Salts and found them disappointing. At the fall 1849 meeting two of them expressed their dissatisfaction with Chappell's product: "Messers S. C. Veirs and L. A. Dawson used the same Salts [Chappell's] on their wheat crop, and from the results, do not think they paid them for the freight and expense of getting and applying the article to their crop, and have used none on their present wheat crop."⁷⁷

Although commercial fertilizers enjoyed growing popularity by the middle of the nineteenth century, Montgomery farmers recognized the usefulness of home-prepared fertilizers as a less costly alternative. In his 1847 report of the Committee on Fields and Fencing, John A. Carter gave a detailed description of how to make compost by combining barnyard manure, swamp earth, lime, plaster of Paris, and crushed bones. Even to this mixture Carter recommended adding guano as a supplement in order to produce a compost bank that would be for the farmer "his mine of wealth—his Golconda."⁷⁸

Urban readers of the minutes today may wonder at the preoccupation with fertilizers, but the society recognized them as the key to restoring Montgomery County's agricultural productivity. When Carter described a guano enriched compost heap as the farmer's Golconda—a city in India noted for its diamonds—he was using hyperbole that was understandable; through the persistent promotion of fertilizers the region's soil did begin to recover its original potential. The recovery was under way by 1850 and progress during the next ten years was rapid. A quarter of a century later, in his address at the 1876 centennial of Montgomery County, Thomas Anderson (1835–1900) observed that "the decade from 1850 to 1860 was one of unrivalled prosperity to our people."⁷⁹ In no small measure, that prosperity owed to early leaders of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society.

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2. J. T. Scharf, *History of Western Maryland* (Phil-

adelphia, 1882), notes that Montgomery County reached its lowest ebb around 1840, at which time "there was a constant stream of emigration from the county, some going to the cotton fields of the South, but most to the fertile new lands of Kentucky and Missouri" (vol. I, p. 653). Helpful background information on the impoverishment of the soil of Maryland and of the efforts of local agricultural societies to restore it, is to be found in Vivian D. Wiser's "The Movement for Agricultural Improvement in Maryland, 1785–1865" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 1963.) See also Wiser, "Improving Maryland's Agriculture, 1840–1860," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 64 (Summer, 1969), pp. 105–132.

3. Scharf, *Western Maryland*, 1:664. William Veirs Bouic's obituary appeared in the *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 8 May 1896.
4. Roger Brooke Farquhar, *Old Homes and History of Montgomery County, Maryland* (Silver Spring, 1952), pp. 217–219. Georgetown was originally a part of Montgomery County, so both residences of John Parke Custis Peter were in Montgomery County.
5. Minutes of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society (hereafter cited as Minutes), 1 June 1846.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *American Farmer*, July 1847, p. 11.
8. *Ibid.*
9. William Henry Farquhar, *Annals of Sandy Spring* (Baltimore, 1884), p. xxix.
10. Farquhar, *Old Homes and History*, p. 133.
11. *American Farmer*, May 1847, p. 335.
12. Thomas Blagden is listed in Boyd's *Washington Directory and National Register* of 1846 as a lumber merchant living on the east side of New Jersey Avenue near I St.
13. Minutes, 10 March 1847.
14. *Ibid.*, 9 September 1847.
15. With the increasing importance of the Maryland Agricultural Society in the late 1840s, the *American Farmer* devoted less coverage to the proceedings of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society.
16. *American Farmer*, October 1846, p. 113.
17. Minutes, 10 September 1846.
18. Scharf, *Western Maryland*, 1:784.
19. In the January 1855 *American Farmer*, p. 206, Benjamin Hollowell wrote on the subject of mixing guano with ashes. He expressed disapproval of the practice because it liberated the ammonia, "thus rendering the manure of much less value."
20. Minutes, 9 September 1847.
21. *American Farmer*, April 1847, p. 298.
22. *Ibid.*, April 1847 and February 1848, p. 247. William Brewer was in favor of what he called neighborhood clubs, or mini-agricultural societies, for each election district of every county—modelled, no doubt, after his own Medley Agricultural Society. His views on the subject, as presented in the letter to the *American Farmer*, are in reference to the state-wide organization in Baltimore. His argument was that it would

- be impossible for older and less affluent members to leave their farms to journey to Baltimore for monthly meetings, and that therefore the Agricultural Club of Maryland would be composed only of men of wealth who could leave their farms in the charge of others. Curiously, there is no mention in the letter of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society. The Medley Agricultural Society predated the latter, and it is quite possible that brewer felt that the Montgomery County Agricultural Society posed a threat to the existence of his own group.
23. A picture of Greenwood appears in Scharf, *Western Maryland*, vol. I, opposite p. 771. Allen Bowie Davis did not begin the milling operation at Triadelphia. It was started by three Quakers from Sandy Spring in 1809. The remains of the town have been under water since 1941, when a dam was constructed by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. For a fuller account of Triadelphia, see E. B. Stabler, "Triadelphia: Forgotten Maryland Town," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 43 (June 1948), pp. 108-120.
 24. For a commemorative notice of Peter, see minutes, 14 September 1848.
 25. Jane Elizabeth Beall (20 June 1815-3 November 1863) was the second of the four daughters of Upton Beall (d. 25 January 1827). Their large brick house, now the headquarters of the Montgomery County Historical Society, is located at the corner of North Adams St. and West Montgomery Ave.—then still part of Commerce Lane.
 26. Minutes, 14 September 1848.
 27. *Ibid.* The Register of Wills Office in the Rockville court house was also used for the regular meetings of the society.
 28. The minutes note that Richard Johns Bowie was present at the first meeting called to organize the Montgomery County Agricultural Society on 4 March 1848.
 29. Minutes, 14 September 1848.
 30. Scharf, *Western Maryland*, 1:733, and Farquhar, *Old Homes and History*, p. 215. The 1860 census lists Major Peter as having real estate valued at \$60,000 and personal estate valued at \$50,000. The total of over a hundred thousand dollars would have made him one of the richest men in Montgomery County.
 31. *American Farmer*, May 1847, p. 331.
 32. Typescript "Memoirs of Horace Capron" (2 vols.), library of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, Md. In 1866 President Andrew Johnson appointed Capron, a staunch Civil War Unionist, Commissioner of Agriculture.
 33. *American Farmer*, August 1845, pp. 36-38.
 34. *Ibid.*, July 1848, p. 7
 35. *Ibid.*
 36. In July 1849 President Zachary Taylor visited the Laurel Factory operation, and his overnight stay proved Capron's love of display. An account of the Prince George's County Agricultural Society's sixth annual exhibit in the *American Farmer* of October 1846, mentions his troop of horses as earlier having caused a sensation in Upper Marlboro.
 37. Peter referred to "three strong horses" in the *American Farmer* of August 1848.
 38. *Ibid.*, p. 225. Col. Capron's cattle purchases were on a large scale. In an account of the Philadelphia Agricultural Society's 1846 exhibition, the *American Farmer* noted: "Col. Capron purchased at a high figure a beautiful lot of South Down Ewes and the Ram which took the premium at Utica, last year, from Mr. Clement. He purchased also at a very high price four splendid Durham cows. In all, about fourteen splendid Durham cattle" (November 1846, p. 134).
 39. Whatever the merits of Capron's stock, awarding prizes to new honorary members was apparently a regular society practice.
 40. Minutes, 14 September 1849. A premium was awarded at the same exhibition to the Triadelphia Factory in the northern part of Montgomery County for its brown cotton.
 41. *Ibid.*
 42. Minutes, 6 November 1847.
 43. *Ibid.*, Minutes 8-9 September 1847.
 44. According to the obituary that appeared in the *Montgomery County Sentinel* of 8 March 1889, Samuel T. Stonestreet was born in Loudon County, Virginia, on 15 August 1803. He came to Montgomery County in 1820 and began work in the clerk's office; he later became chief clerk and in 1850 held property valued at \$12,000.
 45. Minutes, 2 April 1849.
 46. *Ibid.*, 7 April 1849.
 47. *Ibid.*, 15 May 1848.
 48. *Ibid.*, 13 September 1850.
 49. *Ibid.*
 50. Otho Magruder's obituary appeared in the *Montgomery County Sentinel* of 19 April 1856. He was chief judge of the Orphans Court and had just begun his second judicial term at the time of his death. He was one of the five vice presidents (one for each election district) of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society.
 51. Minutes, 6 November 1848.
 52. *American Farmer*, October 1846, p. 113.
 53. Minutes, 10 September 1846.
 54. *Ibid.*, 18 June 1849.
 55. *American Farmer*, October 1849, pp. 126-127.
 56. *Ibid.*
 57. Minutes, 22 June 1850.
 58. Following the resignation of Robert Dunlop in 1856, Robert Dick became the president of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society.
 59. Minutes, 22 June 1850.
 60. *American Farmer*, October 1849, pp. 125-127.
 61. Minutes, 13 September 1849.
 62. Vivian Wiser, "Movement for Agricultural Improvement in Maryland," p. 337.
 63. Minutes, 14 September 1849.
 64. Second prize in the plowing match went to "negroes, Hez. Cooler, & Nich."—for "plowing equally" (Minutes, 14 September 1849).
 65. *American Farmer*, October 1849, p. 127.
 66. *Ibid.*

- 67. Ibid.
- 68. Ibid.
- 69. Minutes, 6 November 1848.
- 70. Ibid., 2 April 1849.
- 71. *American Farmer*, July 1850, p. 11.
- 72. Minutes, 14 September 1849.
- 73. Ibid., 14 November 1849.
- 74. Ibid.
- 75. *American Farmer*, September 1850, p. 121.
- 76. Edward Stabler wrote in the *American Farmer* of July 1850, p. 10: "The Peruvian [guano] is a

- most active fertilizer—perhaps second to none of which we have any knowledge; (the Patagonian I would not again purchase at half its market value, if of similar quality to such as we have used). . . ." Stabler also noted that Peruvian guano sold at about \$50 a ton.
- 77. Minutes, 14 November 1849.
- 78. *American Farmer*, June 1847, p. 366.
- 79. Thomas Anderson, *Centennial Celebration of the Erection of Montgomery County . . .* (Baltimore, 1877), p. 28.

Trolley Lines, Land Speculation and Community-Building: The Early History of Woodside Park, Silver Spring, Maryland

STEVEN LUBAR

To get the full share of Good Health, Long Life, and Happiness for you and your kiddies, to get the most out of life as our Creator intended it to be, A HOME OF YOUR OWN is an absolute necessity.

It promotes happiness and contentment, for it is the most pleasant and natural way to live. It has the correct environment made up of the natural instead of the artificial.

Green grass, trees, shrubbery, flower and vegetable gardens all your own, provide a pleasant pastime, and an abundance of the things we all crave. It is the real life that leads to happiness, for you, and those you love.

—Sears, Roebuck house catalog, 1927¹

THE “OFFICIAL” HISTORY OF SILVER Spring is well known. Local residents repeat the story of Francis Preston Blair’s discovery of a spring flecked with mica while out riding in the summer of 1840 and tell how he established his summer home near what he called Silver Spring. The site of the spring is still preserved today, one of the few historic landmarks in downtown Silver Spring. The history of the city for the next 145 years is much harder to find. Perhaps because Silver Spring is not incorporated, or because there is no local historical society, residents know very little about its recent history. Silver Spring’s ordinary suburbanism leaves nothing on which to build local folklore. Yet its typicality makes Silver Spring important; it is part of a

larger story of suburban growth in Washington and throughout nineteenth- and twentieth-century America.²

The suburbanization of Montgomery County reflected changing economic trends, transportation technology, and commercial development and took place in four phases. The coming of the railroad in the 1870s brought a first wave of suburbanization: farms producing food, especially milk, for the population of the city to the south, and the establishment of railroad commuter suburbs. A second wave began with streetcars in the 1890s; it continued after World War I with the expansion of the federal government and the coming of the automobile. World War II and the dominance of automotive transportation led to the penultimate wave: the development of regional shopping centers and “strip” commercial developments. Finally, the coming of the Washington Metro system has led to a fourth form of suburbanization, that underway today. These suburban waves were shaped by the history of earlier developments, built on them, and, sometimes, washed them away.

Each wave told two stories. The first involved transportation and governmental infrastructures: railroads, trolleys, sewer lines, and land development companies. The second, though harder to find, was as important: the formation of community. I will tell both stories here by detailing the development of one small section of Silver Spring—Woodside Park. Woodside Park was one of many small housing developments that built post-World War I Silver Spring. It consisted of about 200 acres (today about

Steven Lubar works for the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History.

400 houses) directly north of the Silver Spring business district, filling a trapezoid formed by Georgia Avenue, Colesville Avenue, Spring Street, and Dale Drive. The subdivision plan for Woodside Park was filed in 1923, when the Montgomery County suburbs—Chevy Chase, Bethesda, and Wheaton in addition to Silver Spring—boomed. Woodside Park typified suburban development of the 1920s. It reflected the culture, economics and demographics of that era, as well as the development that went before.

Montgomery County's birth coincided with that of the United States, and was caused by it: Frederick County was too large for the meetings that the war necessitated, and so it was split in two. What had formerly been southern Frederick County became Montgomery County. The new county's seat was located at what became, in 1801, the town of Rockville. Before Rockville became a town—it was originally called Montgomery Court House, or Williamsburg—Montgomery County had none. "From Georgetown to Frederick there was not . . . a village, or hamlet, that had a name," recalled a speaker at Montgomery County's centennial celebration in 1876.³

Montgomery County remained rural and grew impoverished. At the first federal census in 1790 the population of the county was 18,000—11,679 whites and 6,324 blacks, almost all of them slaves. The 1830 Census counted 19,816 Montgomery County residents, its peak until 1870. When Blair found the silver spring and established his country home, Montgomery County had the lowest population since its founding in 1776. By 1840 the soil was worn out, and the white population began to emigrate west, seeking the better lands of Kentucky and Missouri. The black population held steady at between 6,000 and 9,000 throughout the nineteenth century.⁴ Rockville remained the only town in the county until after the Civil War. Blair's summer estate was far out in the Maryland countryside, surrounded only by similar Washington estates and small farms.⁵ The city of Washington, about eight miles south of the

silver spring, was a small town, with little commercial development.

The first signs of the expansion of Washington's commercial interest were the new transportation routes that began to radiate from the city. Washington was linked to the West by the cumbersome Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and, indirectly, by the National Road. The B & O Railroad linked Washington with Baltimore in 1835, though that link was never the *raison d'être* of the railroad. Rather, the B & O thought of itself as Baltimore's route to the West. The port towns near Washington—Alexandria and Georgetown—were Baltimore's competitors, and the railroad's backers, almost all from Baltimore, had no interest in helping their commercial rivals. Rail transportation was by way of Baltimore, and the owners of the B & O were happy with that situation.⁶

Washington businessmen were not so content, and they chartered the Metropolitan Railroad in 1853 to connect the capital city with the west. They were unsuccessful for a variety of reasons, including political opposition from Baltimore interests. After the Civil War they tried again, this time with better luck; the city had boomed during the war, and the war had shown the need for a railroad heading west from Washington. The B & O decided to build the line itself to avoid competition, and started construction on the "Metropolitan" line, between Washington and Point of Rocks, forty-two miles to the west, in 1866. Service on the line began in May 1873.⁷

The Metropolitan line ran through sparsely populated farm country, for the population of Montgomery County in 1880 was less than 25,000. Only two additional towns had been chartered by that year: Poolesville, not on the railroad, and Gaithersburg, near Rockville. There were only two permanent station buildings on the line, one in Rockville, built when the line opened, and the other, built in 1878, in what is now downtown Silver Spring. There was little local passenger traffic on the line—initially, only one local train daily. The towns of Montgomery County were still very small. Silver Spring, then

called Sligo, was barely a town, with only sixteen farm houses, three stores, two churches, a blacksmith shop, a shoe shop, a post office, and an inn.⁸

The major effect of the line was the encouragement of commercial farming in Montgomery County: milk, vegetables, and meat for the Washington market. It also encouraged the building of summer houses by wealthy Washingtonians. Crosby S. Noyes, editor and part owner of the *Washington Star*, for example, purchased 100 acres of land about a mile from the Silver Spring station in 1882. Mr. Noyes and his family lived at his Silver Spring farm seven months of the year, returning to their Dupont Circle residence for the winter months. The Noyes estate will feature prominently in this story later, for it became the central part of Woodside Park.⁹

Suburban development proper began in the late 1880s. Throughout the country

railroad companies promoted suburban commuter communities. Washingtonians, eager to escape the unhealthy climate of the city, joined the exodus. The first development along the Metropolitan line was Takoma Park, settled in 1886 by Seventh-Day Adventists. Garrett Park, Kensington, and Forest Glen were next, in 1887. Garrett Park, named for Robert Garrett, the B & O's president, was modeled after New York's Tuxedo Park and Philadelphia's Bryn Mawr. The name Kensington (changed from Knowles at this time) indicates the model for that suburb. Forest Glen already had an appropriately suburban name; it was promoted as a summer resort as well as a suburban community. In 1890 Montgomery County's population was a little over 30,000¹⁰ (Figure 1).

Forest Glen plays an important part in the history of Woodside Park, for it later became the destination of the trolley car

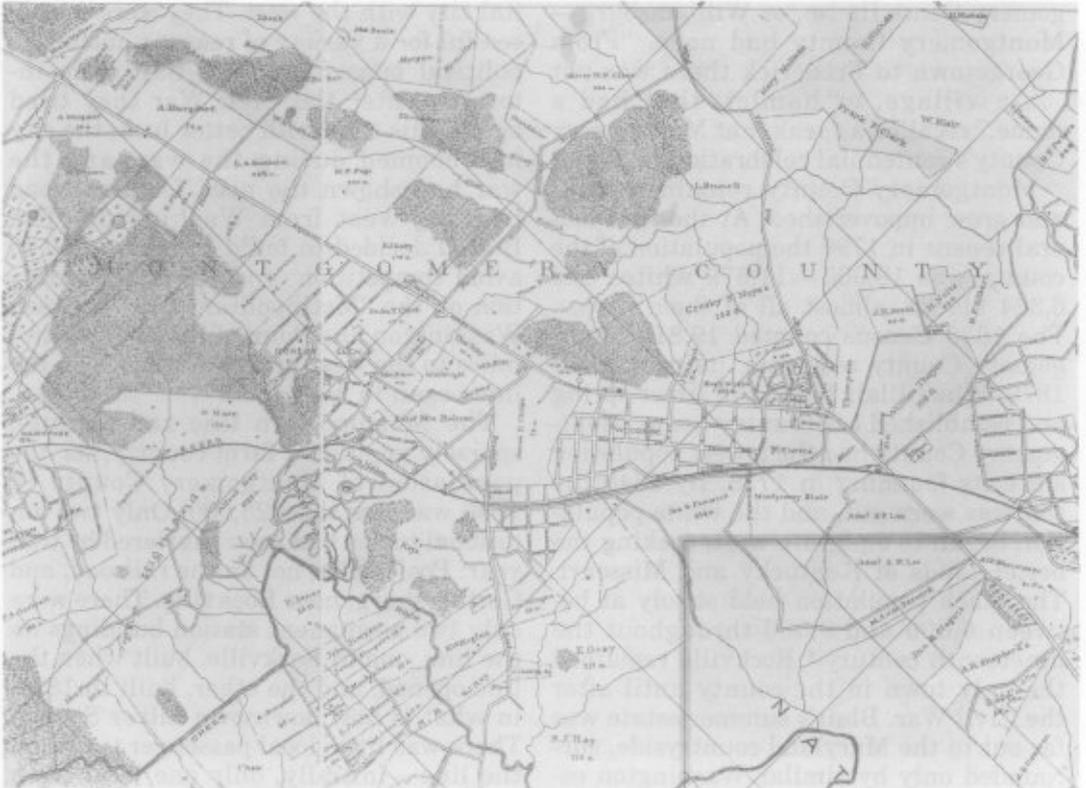


FIGURE 1. All illustrations courtesy of the Library of Congress. Sligo, from G. M. Hopkin's *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington*, 1879.

line that ran through Woodside Park, and thus deserves some attention here. The first structure built by the Forest Glen Investment Company was Ye Forest Inne, a large resort hotel that opened in 1887. The company also laid out some 500 lots along some eighteen proposed streets. In short, it undertook to build a typical suburban development. Unfortunately, its plans failed, and in 1894 the hotel was sold to John A. I. Cassidy, who turned the building into a girls' school—the National Park Seminary.¹¹

Three years after the Forest Glen Investment Company tried unsuccessfully to establish its suburb, another developer had little better luck with a nearby community. Judge Benjamin F. Leighton bought 100 acres of farmland stretching from the B & O line to the Brookeville Turnpike, less than a mile north of the Silver Spring station, and organized a subdivision he called Woodside. His promotional brochure emphasized the low price of lots and houses:

Lots for sale on easy terms; Houses built and sold for small cash payments; The lot prices are lower than in any other subdivision similiarly suited on the [Metropolitan] Branch, ranging from \$225 to \$600.

Judge Leighton financed the construction of a Woodside station on the B & O, to serve his new development.¹²

The evidence of surviving houses indicates that Woodside was not a great success; there are only a small number of houses in that community dating before the turn of the century. In 1910 the development had a population of only 300. All of the lots were sold off at Judge Leighton's death in June 1921,¹³ but, again judging from the architecture, there were many undeveloped lots in 1930. (Woodside Station is no more, torn down sometime after 1935; its memory survives in the name of a new townhouse development about one-half mile from the site of the station.)

Judge Leighton was no doubt familiar with the activities of the many real estate developers who operated out of Washington in the 1880s. Development companies built most of Washington's Mary-

land suburbs. The first and most important of these companies was the Chevy Chase Land Company, formed in 1890 by William Stewart and Francis G. Newlands, senators from Nevada. The Chevy Chase Land company bought the several thousand acres that is now Chevy Chase, built a street railway with an amusement park at its end, and sold lots for development. Stewart and Newlands' vision was comprehensive; it included restrictions on ownership and cost and placement of houses as well as social institutions for the new neighborhood. The Chevy Chase Land Company set the style for developments for the next fifty years.¹⁴

Even before the senators from Nevada undertook to profit from the expansion of the nation's capital, Congress had begun to pass laws regulating and controlling development. Downtown Washington, of course, was planned from the start. These later laws, part of the "City Beautiful Movement" of the late nineteenth century, ordered Washington's expansion. In 1893 and again in 1898 Congress passed laws mandating the system of street names and the matching of city and suburban street plans. In 1901 it established the Park Commission to set up a system of parks. These laws, claims the historian of the city, were "the first concious attempt to guide the suburban growth of an American community along lines that would ensure harmony between new developments and the parent city."¹⁵

The Chevy Chase Land Company was not an immediate success; it began to sell lots just as depression hit the country. But by World War I Chevy Chase boomed, and land companies began to develop neighborhoods throughout the Maryland suburbs.

By the late 1890s Silver Spring had undergone the first phase of suburban development, that based on railroad transportation. The 1890s were the peak of railroad service to the area, with some eighteen passenger trains daily passing the Silver Spring station—twelve of them locals.¹⁶ But Silver Spring proper was still a very small town. Gist Blair, grandson of the founder, referred to the town in 1897 as "a cross-roads without in-

habitants."¹⁷ A photograph of the Brookeville Turnpike taken at this time shows a narrow, unpaved flint-rock road with farms on either side (Figure 2). But it was at just this time that the second phase of suburbanization, based on trolley lines, came to Silver Spring.

The "Washington, Woodside, and Forest Glen Railway and Power Company of Montgomery County, Maryland" was incorporated on 26 July 1895. It was founded and financed by a group of Montgomery County land owners, among them Cassedy and Leighton, and named, suitably, for its termini and the developments in which its major owners had a stake. The line ran from Forest Glen to the Brookeville Turnpike, then past Woodside to the District Line and the terminus of the Brightwood Railway Company, a total length of 2.9 miles. This trip

took about fifteen minutes. The trip continued on the tracks of the Brightwood trolley to its southern terminus at Georgia Avenue and W Street. (The Brightwood line had some common ownership with the Forest Glen line.) From there passengers made connections to ride to downtown Washington. Construction of the Forest Glen line began in 1897, and was completed and opened for traffic on 25 November 1897.¹⁸

The Forest Glen trolley route led it through downtown Silver Spring and its outlying developments. The trolley began to replace the train for those who commuted into the city; it was cheaper, though it took more time, about fifty minutes. It must have encouraged settlement in Woodside and Forest Glen, though those developments remained thinly settled: in 1910 Woodside had a

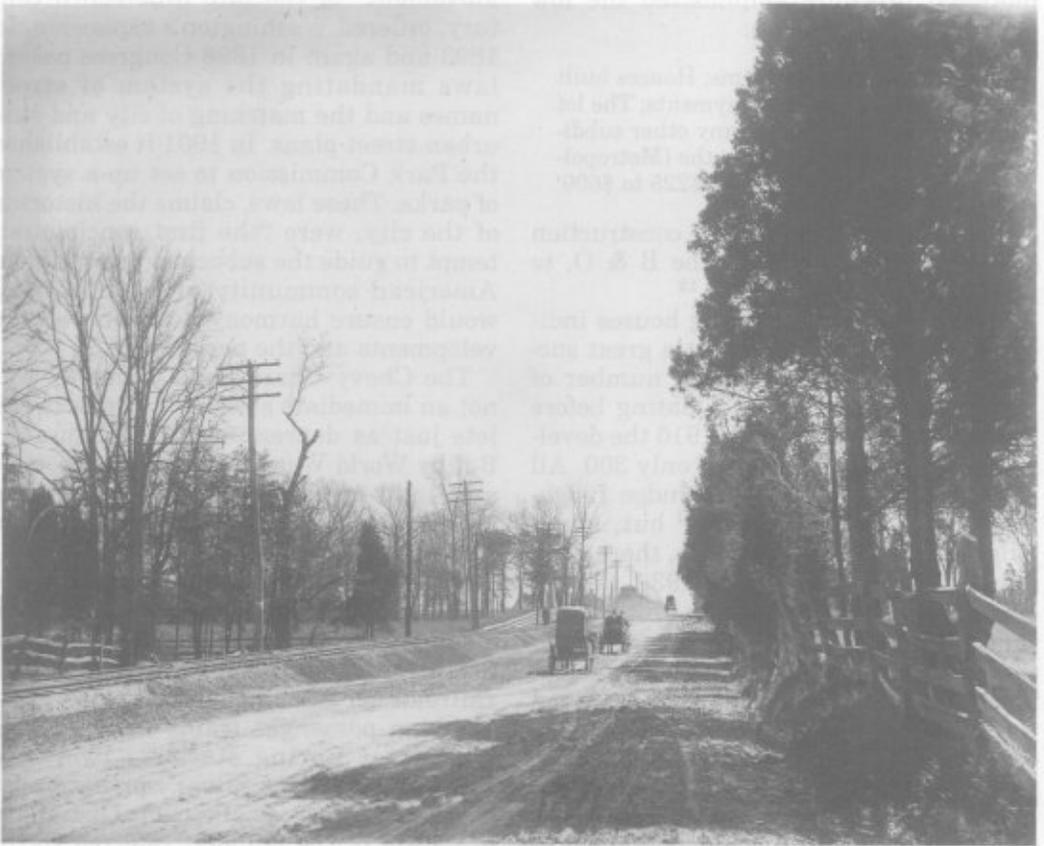


FIGURE 2. Brookeville Turnpike, just north of Silver Spring, ca. 1900.

population of 300, Forest Glen 225. Silver Spring, all told, had only 4,500 inhabitants. Takoma Park, the next town on the line to Washington, had a population of 5,000. The suburb and developments further out were much smaller: Kensington had 800, Garrett Park 175. Even the older towns farther away were smaller: Rockville, the county seat, had a population of only 1,500. Chevy Chase had about the same population as Silver Spring and Takoma Park.¹⁹

There was still little commercial development in downtown Silver Spring. The 1916 Sanborn fire insurance map shows only four stores—a bakery; a hardware and farm implement store; a garage; a flour, feed and grain store; and a post office, bank, and armory. The residential area consisted of twenty-seven scattered dwellings on Sligo, Silver Spring, Thayer, Georgia, and Colesville streets. Gist Blair reported in 1917 that “Silver Spring at present consists of some seventy-five dwellings, ten stores, a mill, and a national bank”²⁰ (Figure 3).

It was not until after World War I that Silver Spring began to boom. The population of Washington went from 331,000 to 438,000 between 1910 and 1920, an increase of thirty-three percent; the number of government workers jumped from 39,000 to 94,000. Montgomery County’s population took its greatest jump to date, from about 35,000 in 1920 to almost 50,000 ten years later.

Silver Spring was ready for its part of this expansion. The infrastructure necessary for expanded development was put into place: an elementary school opened in Woodside in 1908; a Women’s Cooperative Improvement Society was founded in 1913; in 1915 the Volunteer Fire Department was founded, and in 1916 the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission was formed to provide water and sewage lines. Until the formation of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1927, the WSSC was the *de facto* Maryland suburbs’ planner, for it had to approve all new subdivisions.²¹ Silver Spring still had no local government, and thus, a resident wrote, “suffers from many of the troubles of unincorpor-

ated villages.” That would not be a problem long, though, for, “the flourishing community is even now planning a government to furnish all of these necessities.”²²

With the new water and sewage service and fire coverage, Silver Spring was ripe for development. Looking toward the future, Gist Blair told the members of the Columbia Historical Society “[Silver Spring’s] growth and prosperity are assured.”²³ Land values appreciated, and it no longer made economic sense to use the land for farming. Landowners began to sell off their estates to development companies.

The Woodside Development Corporation was formed in 1922, and in December of that year the Noyes family sold Alton Farm to it. In January 1923 the Woodside Development Corporation filed a subdivision plan showing streets. In April 1924 the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission approved the layout, and, not long after, the Woodside Park Development Corporation began to advertise lots for sale.²⁴

Advertisements for Woodside Park revealed the attractions of suburban life and the goal of community. The Woodside brochure made five claims: scenic beauty; the existence of a community; restrictions to insure the proper development of the area; and, of course, the *sine qua non* of real estate, location and price. Scenic beauty was a primary claim. A newspaper ad for the development promised “a natural park of nearly 200 rolling acres, winding drives, beautiful woodland, unsurpassed natural landscape features.”²⁵ The emphasis on the beauty of the site was expanded in a brochure the developers distributed:

The beautiful grounds surrounding the old home are shaded by giant oaks, elms, maples, walnuts, and a variety of lesser trees, set off by rare shrubs brought from various parts of the world and planted with infinite care and skill. The rolling hills, wooded slopes, sparkling spring-fed brooks winding through shaded dells, present a matchless panorama to delight the senses.²⁶

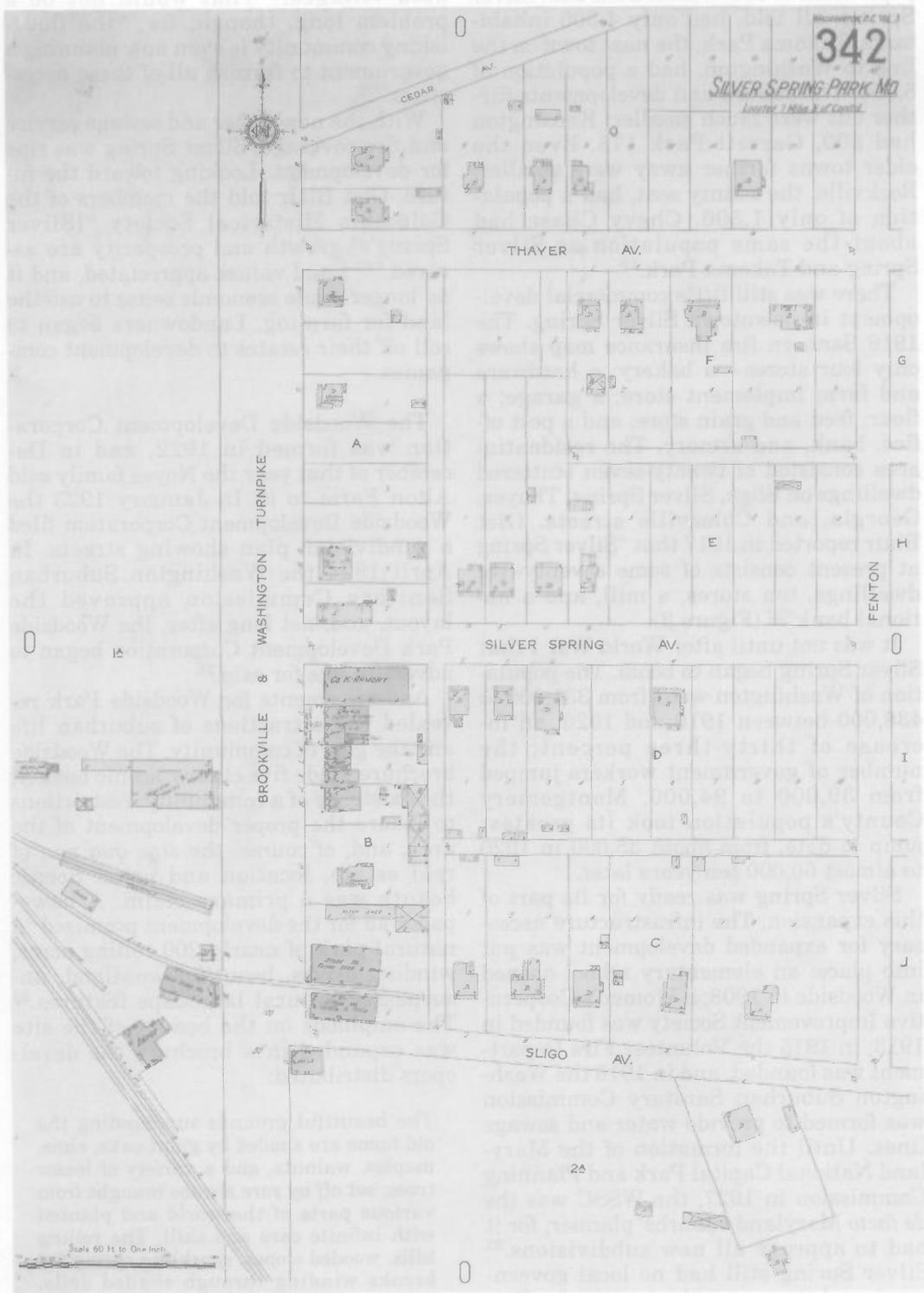


FIGURE 3. Sanborn fire insurance map of Silver Spring, 1916.

The brochure went on at some length about "the fine old trees and wealth of planting," and the ways in which the feel of the country estate would be preserved. Not rural beauty, but the carefully planned beauty of a country estate, or better, a park—the improvements described as "rustic" and "picturesque"—was the lure dangled by the Woodside Development Corporation.

Prospective buyers were assured that they were not moving to an undeveloped rural area: "This tract is situated in the midst of an old established community of refined homes. It is convenient to churches and schools and characterized by desirable modern advantages." The modern advantages were water and electric service, the lines laid out with the roads. Sewer and gas lines and mail delivery waited until the early 1930s. The developers were clearly appealing to people of an urban sensibility; as we shall see, the first residents moved *out* from Washington, not *in* from the country.

Part of the community promised prospective Woodside Park residents was a civic association. The promotional brochure outlined its role:

In our plan for the promotion of Woodside Park we have provided a means looking toward the future maintenance of the park. This includes organization of the Property Owners' Improvement Association, which will have entire charge of maintaining the improvements, enforcing the restrictions, and promoting the general welfare of the community.

The Property Owners' Association was written into the deeds; the Woodside Development Corporation agreed only to keep up the streets until 15 January 1925, when the association "to enforce restrictions for the upkeep of the park streets and ways, maintain street lights and other improvements" would be formed.²⁷

Restrictions to ensure that the community would develop in an appropriate way were built into both the formal and informal sale of lots in the new development. "Wise restrictions have been adopted," the developers wrote, "with a view to preserving Woodside Park as a

neighborhood characterized by charming lines and refined surroundings." These restrictions, enforced in the deeds, insisted on four key elements in the formation of the suburb:

that each house have a value of at least \$6,000; that only one house be built on each parcel of land; that the land be used exclusively for residential purposes; that all houses be placed at least forty feet from the property line; that "for the purpose of sanitation and health" no owner "will sell or lease the said land to any one of a race whose death rate is at a higher percentage than the white race."

All of these restrictions were typical of other subdivisions built in the period. The \$6,000 minimum value is higher than the average; others ranged from \$3,000 to over \$10,000. The racial restriction, to judge from other deeds of the same period, is a restriction against blacks. It too is unfortunately typical; in the same language, or in language even harsher, blacks were excluded from almost all the Maryland suburban developments. Restrictions on other groups—Asians or Jews—were not given legal standing in these deeds, but were apparently enforced in some Maryland and District suburbs.²⁸

First the developer and later the Property Owners' Improvement Association enforced the restrictions. Informal enforcement of community standards was probably as important as legal enforcement, either by the developers or by the Association. The developers sold land at reduced rates to residents that they thought would be "an asset to the new development."²⁹ Moreover, many of the new residents were related to each other. Though it is impossible to determine the extent of family ties, family names of residents and oral tradition indicates its importance.³⁰ Legal enforcement was resorted to when necessary. In 1937 the Civic Association filed suit to prevent houses costing less than \$6,000 from being built. Mostly, though, the Civic Association concerned themselves with small issues of neighborhood concern, working through the Allied Civic Group, an umbrella association that members of

the Woodside Park Civic Association helped to found in the 1930s.³¹

Price and location were the final—or perhaps the first—attractions. The developer sold lots at between six and ten cents per square foot—between \$2,600 and \$4,400 dollars for the acre. Reduced rates, as low as three cents per square foot, were available in less desirable locations and for potential buyers the developers wanted to attract. Financing was available, with as little as ten percent cash down. The brochure noted the locations as the most “outstanding” around Washington “for the building of distinctive homes expressing individual character and taste.”³²

The Woodside Development Corporation advertised itself as “an organization with twenty years experience behind it.” Charles Hopkins, the president of the firm, was also a principal of Hopkins-Armstrong, Inc., a real estate firm. Hopkins had moved from Newport News, Virginia, to a very large Woodside Park house that had appeared in the 1878 Hopkins atlas as the “Jno. C. Wilson Res.”; M. K. Armstrong, the other principal of the real estate firm, was secretary of the Woodside Development Corporation. Their experience clearly showed in their brochure; it details of the essential elements of the suburban dream of the 1920s. The developers knew what potential suburbanites wanted.

They also knew how to attract them. They advertised Woodside Park in the *Washington Star*, sharing space in the real estate section with dozens of other new suburban developments. Wynnewood Park, a part of Woodside Park developed separately by a realtor, advertised in the *Star* and also by means of a sign in downtown Silver Spring.³³ Woodside Park may well have advertised there too, attracting those already living in the suburbs, who would see the sign on the trolley car everyday, or those riding the trolley car out into the countryside, whether house-hunting or for amusement.

County land records indicate 133 sales of land in Woodside Park by the end of 1927.³⁴ Many individuals bought land

but did not build on it. The 1927–28 *Polk's Washington Suburban Directory*, the first to list Woodside Park as a separate neighborhood, notes forty-four individuals in the neighborhood, apparently thirty-six households.³⁵ Some land owners in the new subdivision no doubt purchased the land as a speculation, evident by the rapid resale of some plots within two or three years; others no doubt hoped to build within a few years, and had to postpone their hopes of moving to the suburbs when the Depression hit Washington.

Who were the early settlers of this new suburban neighborhood? Where were they from? Of thirty-three new households (three of the thirty six have names and occupations too common to trace) twenty-five can be found in the Washington area five years earlier. Of these twenty-five, seventeen moved to Woodside Park from the District of Columbia, all but one of them from the Northwest quadrant of the city. Most of these Washingtonians already lived fairly far from the city center, in “suburban” developments opened up in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Eight of the new residents already lived in the Maryland suburbs, four of them in Silver Spring, four in other nearby suburbs. Few of the new residents found their new suburban residence much different from their previous homes.³⁶

The occupations of thirty of the forty-four residents of the area can be determined, either for 1927 or for a date within the previous five years. Typical occupations included: architect, clerk, contractor, office manager, chemist, florist, sheet metal worker, secretary, life insurance agent, machinist, auditor, lawyer, plasterer, draftsman, and real estate agent. Almost all were white-collar workers. Most were employees of large firms; ten of the thirty whose employer can be determined worked for the United States government (This was typical of Silver Spring; the Maryland WPA guide, in its small entry for Silver Spring, noted that “most of its residents are Government workers.”) Many, to judge from listings in the *Washington Directory*,

commuted to downtown Washington. All of the residents could afford to spend about \$10,000 or more on a lot and house in a day when the average annual income was \$2,300.³⁷

The proud new land owners had several housing options to choose from. They could simply hire an architect or a contractor and have a house designed and built, or they could take advantage of one of the several pre-designed (and in some cases even pre-built) options that became available in the 1920s. Several companies, including Sears, Roebuck, sold kits complete with plans and all necessary components to build a house. A buyer could put the pieces together himself, or, apparently more common, hire a contractor to do it for him. The Sears catalog homes were directed at developments exactly like Woodside Park, the advertisements in the Sears "Honor-Bilt Homes" catalog coinciding exactly with the claims of suburban developers (Figure 4).

By 1926 Sears included over one hundred house types in its catalog, including several that resemble those built in Woodside Park. Oral tradition has it that several of the houses in Woodside Park are Sears houses, though searches of extant Sears catalogs have not turned up any houses identical to those in Woodside Park—many are similar—and the Sears archives cannot verify that any of the homes in the neighborhood are indeed Sears houses.³⁸

If not Sears catalog kit houses, some houses likely were built from store-bought plans, for houses identical to several Woodside Park houses are found in other parts of the Washington suburban area. Sears sold plans not listed in the catalogs, as did many other firms. *American Builder* for this period, for example, had for sale plans for dozens of similar houses in each monthly issue; Washington area contractors and architect/builders could gladly supply more. Architectural evidence indicates that a few builders constructed many of the early houses of Woodside Park.

Some parts of Woodside Park were developed by architect/builders who bought land, built houses, and then sold the fin-

ished house. Robert Murphy, who advertised himself as an "owner-builder," bought a large lot of land from the developers of Woodside Park and built a number of Tudor revival residences he called "Seven Gables" houses. This small development within a development was called "Wynnewood Park"; it represented another variation on the theme of Washington suburban development.³⁹

By 1927 nearly forty houses were built, and more were underway. Some were the popular wood-framed bungalow; some brick neo-Tudor, a few stone mansions. Woodside Park began to fill out as a subdivision, and, the next step in any new development, it began to become a community.

Some elements in the formation of community were in place before Woodside Park was brought into being. Churches and schools that serviced the communities of Woodside and Silver Spring were part of the attractions noted in Woodside Park advertisements. The developer provided communal amenities like "beautiful entrance columns," shelters for use while waiting for the trolley cars, and extensive park land.⁴⁰

But deed restrictions and government employment went farthest toward explaining the development of community in Woodside Park. Indeed Washington never developed the classic "streetcar suburbs" of cities like Boston or Philadelphia; there was little difference in the social makeup of a railroad-centered development like Woodside and the streetcar-centered development of Woodside Park, created across the road from it thirty years later. Perhaps the early planning activities of the city had some effect; more likely, the lack of an ethnic working class meant that all suburban developments in Montgomery County were middle class, like those around Silver Spring, or upper-middle class, like those around Chevy Chase. The peculiar income base of the city affected not only the land use of the city center but also its suburbs.

While many Woodside Park residents commuted into the District of Columbia each day, others worked in Silver Spring.

Own Your Own Home



Long Life and Happiness

To get the full share of Good Health, Long Life and Happiness for yourself and kiddies, to get the most out of life as our Creator intended it should be, A HOME OF YOUR OWN is an absolute necessity.

It promotes happiness and contentment, for it is the most pleasant and natural way to live. It has the correct environment made up of the natural instead of the artificial.

Green grass, trees, shrubbery, flower and vegetable gardens all your own, provide a pleasant pastime, and an abundance of the things we all crave. It is the real life that leads to happiness, for you, and those you love.

Best of all, a home of your own does not cost you any more than your present mode of living. Instead of paying monthly rental, by our Easy Payment Plan you may have all these luxuries at a lower cost and, in the end, have a beautiful home instead of worthless rent receipts.

Our plan is simple. It has already enabled thousands of people to get out of the renter's class. This plan will put you in your own home and give you your independence.

On the following pages you will find over 100 designs of homes. Some of them will surely meet with your ideas of what a real home should be.

We will gladly tell you all about any house in this book and will show you how easy it is to own a home on our Easy Payment Plan. Write us. An Information Blank has been placed in the back of this book for your convenience.

Be sure to read about our Ready-Cut System on pages 10 and 11, and how this system will save about one-half of your carpenter labor.

Information Blank on Page 141



Save Your Rent Money



Give the Kiddies a Chance



Get Close to Nature



Have Real Friends and Neighbors



Be Independent in Old Age

Our EASY Payment PLAN makes it POSSIBLE WHY PAY RENT ?

Silver Spring, though today a regional commercial center, was still a sleepy town in 1930. Much more blue-collar than the planned developments less than a mile away, it had a small industrial base, including a planing mill, a slaughterhouse, a dairy, and a row of stores along its main street. It represented yet another type of development—more typical of nineteenth-century country towns built around railroad stations than either nineteenth-century railroad suburbs or twentieth-century suburbs built first around streetcar lines and then automobiles. Silver Spring, a second-order metropolis just eight miles from downtown Washington, served to some extent as a regional shopping center to its outlying communities, but it lacked close ties with them. The part of Woodside Park to be developed last (in the 1940s and 1950s) lay closest to downtown Silver Spring.⁴¹

The Depression, though it hit Washington real estate early and hard, before long brought its own relief with it. The federal government boomed as the New Deal was put into place, and sales of real estate and houses in the area picked up after the Depression. The population of Wheaton and Silver Spring almost doubled from 7,829 to 13,377 between 1920 to 1930, when Woodside Park and many other developments like it were created. It more than doubled in the next ten years, reaching almost 29,000 by 1940.⁴² Woodside Park boomed with it. A 1938 map shows only twenty-three of the 352 lots in the development unsold.⁴³ As early as 1933 the North Washington Realty Company could advertise its own developments by pointing to established developments like Woodside Park. It labeled its advertising brochure: “North Washington: Beautiful Parks, Arterial High-

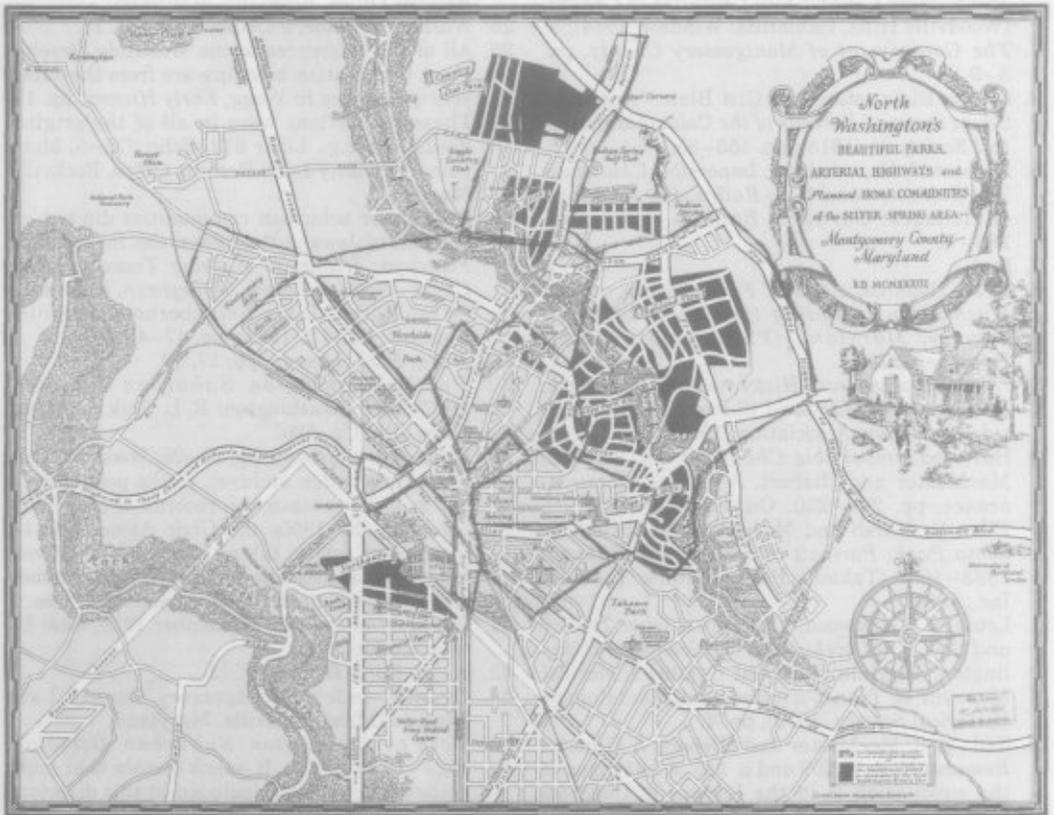


FIGURE 5. Advertisement for North Woodside Realty Company, 1933.

ways and Planned Home Communities of the Silver Spring Area"⁴⁴ (Figure 5).

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The Commercial Rise and Fall of Silver Spring: A Study of the 20th Century Development of the Suburban Shopping Center in Montgomery County

MARK WALSTON

IN THE BRIEF SPAN OF TWELVE YEARS, from 1938 to 1950, the town of Silver Spring in Montgomery County went from a quiet residential suburb of Washington, D.C. to the second largest business community in the State of Maryland. But in the following years, Silver Spring's commercial vitality would be diminished and then eclipsed by the expansion throughout the county of the very facility which had inaugurated its rise to pre-eminence: the automobile-oriented suburban shopping center.

By the 1930s over sixty stores and shops had opened their doors for business in Silver Spring; their flat brick facades and pent roofs formed a continuous ribbon of development stretching along Georgia Avenue, from the town's older railroad station orientation northward. But still the surge of commercial activity which had taken place in the years after World War I was not enough to satiate the growing consumer population rapidly filling the area's burgeoning residential developments.¹

Coinciding with the phenomenal growth of the federal government under the New Deal programs of the Roosevelt administration, the population of Montgomery County swelled enormously during the 1930s, from 49,206 in 1930 to 83,912 by 1940. The two lower districts of

Wheaton—which included Silver Spring—and Bethesda, because of their proximity and immediate access to the Nation's Capital, experienced the greatest burst of residential construction activity, so much so that by the end of the decade almost sixty-five percent of the county's population lived in these two election districts.²

Real estate developers of the 1930s sensed the increasing commercial value of land adjoining the existing small shopping district of Silver Spring. A traffic count made in 1938 showed an average of 15,000 automobiles passing through Silver Spring on Georgia Avenue every twenty-four hours, making it one of the heaviest-traveled thoroughfares in the State of Maryland,³ coupled with immediate residents, it constituted a large pool of potential customers for any new Silver Spring business. But still most of the shopping needs of the lower county were being serviced by the downtown Washington stores. As a study of the development possibilities in the Silver Spring area conducted in the mid-1930s concluded: "the size and importance and character of the population of Silver Spring and the contiguous area can no longer be serviced at a distance. The town requires and is ready to give its support to local business enterprises such as will find proper facilities."⁴

Inspired by the report's findings, C. H. Hillegeist, a Washington developer, took an option on a vacant parcel at the southeast corner of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road, above the northern limits of

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Silver Spring's existing commercial district, and set out to interest others in a large-scale commercial venture. By 1937 a development partnership consisting of Hillegeist, Albert Small, S. E. Godden and William A. Julian, former Treasurer of the United States, had been formed, and immediately they began laying the groundwork for a comprehensive shopping center to be constructed on the site; broad in scope, the group envisioned a commercial facility unlike any other operating in Suburban Maryland. To design the complex they contracted John Ebersson, the noted New York City architect.⁵

In design, the Silver Spring Shopping Center was to mark a sharp break with the earlier haphazard ribbons of single stores found along the county's main roads and with the smaller, unified shopping center designs associated with the larger residential developments. The suburban shopping blocks constructed in Montgomery County during the 1920s were often disguised as townhouse streetscapes, reflecting the segmented facades of earlier commercial developments and following the revival styles then popular for residential architecture. The Montgomery Hills Shopping Center, on Georgia Avenue north of Silver Spring, built during the 1920s and masquerading as a row of English Tudor townhouses, typified earlier designs.

The Silver Spring Shopping Center, however, eschewed the traditional approach for a thoroughly modern style. The building composed an interesting blend between the earlier Art Deco style—frankly decorative, modish and expensive, relying heavily on custom handiwork—and the later Streamline Moderne, stripped of exuberant ornamentation and incorporating ready-made modern synthetics in its design. In form, the shopping center moved in a sweeping arc from Georgia Avenue to Colesville Road, its motion accentuated by rounded corners and continued by a banded aluminum canopy—painted in red, white and blue stripes—running the full length of the main facade. Emphasizing the horizontal movement as well were dark bands

of glazed brick, alternating with the predominant blond bricks, along the upper courses of the parapet. For decorative relief, bands of red vitrolite, an opaque glass manufactured by the company of the same name, were set into the brick above the store windows fronting on Georgia Avenue.

Easily adapted to mass duplication, the Streamline Moderne style—from which Ebersson's shopping center took most of its design cues—was thought to be symbolic of the dynamic industrial and technological twentieth century, of speed and machines, fast cars, trains and steamships.⁶ Sleek mechanical curves appeared everywhere in the designs; the allusions to the nautical designs of the streamlined luxury liners of the period are apparent in Ebersson's design for the complex, particularly in the marquee mast, dark-brick portholes and rounded stern of the Silver Theater which anchors the northeast corner of the shopping center.

Such commercial architectural designs of the 1930s were outgrowths of design in other fields. Ironically, it was the economic depression beginning in 1929 that gave architects like Ebersson their greatest opportunities at progressive store design. As long as architectural style was a product, a commodity, there was little reason to change it. However, in the early 1930s, as business declined in all fields, a few concerned but forward-thinking firms began to visualize how the restyling of their products might result both in eye-appeal and increased sales. The result was what is commonly called "streamlining."

The great majority of product designs in the "streamlined decade" of the 1930s cannot be considered serious attempts at improved functional design; many of the "styling jobs" were either merely the use of new color schemes—paint it pink instead of white—or simple reductions of surface contours—with its concomitant decrease in manufacturing costs. That the public readily accepted the changes perhaps encouraged other businesses to follow the early efforts.

Everything from automobiles and railway cars to kitchen equipment and

bathroom fixtures underwent stylistic changes. It was then only natural that both businessmen and the buying public would expect the stores and shopping centers carrying these "new style" items to be as inviting, interesting and "up-to-date" as the products on the shelf. French chateaux, Georgian brick rowhouses, or English Tudor villages were no longer appropriate settings for modern merchandising; consequently most store-owners in the 1930s turned to the Streamline Moderne when constructing their new places of business.⁷

Too, economic considerations encouraged the ready acceptance of the "streamlined look" for businesses of the 1930s. The Depression forced fledgling store-owners and large-scale commercial developers to fight for their existence, to count every penny spent on construction and equipment. Architects as well developed deeper commitments to economical buildings and low-cost construction, utilizing widely available materials and methods. There was no room left for the pretentious emporiums of easy, earlier times, overly decorative and often suffused with costly custom-made ornamentation.

The Moderne style, drastically stripped of surface decoration and happily employing ready-made, mass produced architectural elements, thus became the perfect style for cost-conscious clients and the style for commercial commissions in the 1930s, in particular office buildings, shopping centers and movie theaters; Eberson's Silver Spring center was the first notable appearance of the style in its commercial form in Montgomery County.

An even greater force eventually directed the design of the Silver Spring Shopping Center. After 1910, the dominance of the automobile in American life had grown steadily, and yet, in the 1930s, many stores were still planned without a recognition of the importance of parking to a store's success. Older stores along Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring, molded to fit the requirements of the narrow rectangular lots on which they were sited, had been turned out in long strips with total site coverage, leaving little accommodations for parking. Gradually, the shopkeepers began to lose trade because of the parking incommmodity encountered by the new automobile-oriented cus-



FIGURE 1. John Eberson's Silver Spring Shopping Center, shortly after its opening in 1938. (M-NCPPC)

tomor. The architect Ebersson, however, recognized the importance of easy car access to the vitality of a modern commercial facility, and his new shopping center was specifically designed with the automobile in mind.⁸

When completed in 1938, the Silver Spring Shopping Center, encompassing nineteen stores, a Warner Brothers' theater and a gasoline station, was the county's first "modern" full-service automobile-oriented shopping center. Parking areas were provided both in the deep-set front and at the rear of the complex. Connecting the two areas was an underpass beneath the center, both for automobiles and pedestrians, eliminating the need for cars and people to "go around the block again." Many of the stores had double entrances and could be approached from both the front and rear parking areas. The arrangement allowed delivery trucks to replenish the stores with a minimum of disturbance to customer parking and to traffic along the major thoroughfares.

The Silver Spring Shopping Center was

an immediate success. Reports from national chain stores interested in occupying the center described it as "the most comprehensive and complete of its kind in the Eastern States."⁹ At its opening, the *Washington Post* noted the center to be "representative of the best ideas in modern business center development, arranged to fit in with the modern scheme of living, where nothing is haphazard, and compact, time-saving, energy-saving ideas are the popular ones."¹⁰ The facility announced a new era in shopping center design in Montgomery County, setting a standard for later developers.

The material and manpower shortages of World War II, however, brought a temporary halt to the commercial expansion of Silver Spring, dissipating any immediate design impact Ebersson's shopping center could have had on subsequent developments. In fact, throughout the county, no significant additions to shopping facilities appeared during the war years. As a result, county shoppers in the 1940s still largely depended on stores



FIGURE 2. A detail of the Silver Spring Shopping Center, ca. 1940, with the banded stern of the Silver Theater rising behind. (M-NCPPC)

within the District of Columbia, despite the presence of the hugely-successful Silver Spring Shopping Center. With eleven percent of the population of the Washington metropolitan area, Montgomery County had only 5 percent of the region's department and general merchandise retail sales, 7.4 percent of food sales, 8.8 percent of gasoline sales, and 12 percent of new and used car sales.¹¹ The pattern was apparent to any businessmen looking to the county as a likely location for operations: residents bought food, cars and gasoline close to home, but relied on the city for clothing, furniture, jewelry and department store purchases. Consequently, in the late 1940s, these were the types of stores that in rapid succession began crowding the commercial districts of suburban Montgomery County, and in particular Silver Spring.

The postwar years became one of the greatest store building periods in the county's history, as it was throughout the nation. The boom resulted from two simple commercial compulsions: the release, after a long withholding, of a flood of goods to a rich and hungry market; and the need to compensate for the curtailment of new construction by the wartime building blackout.

Suburban stores sprang up in great variety throughout Montgomery County in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The majority, primarily constructed by small-scale real estate investment developers, found initial success from their advantageous location close to suburban population centers, offering customers a welcome alternative to the dilemma of the older downtown shopping areas, with their congested traffic and inadequate parking facilities. Yet concurrent with the proliferation of the small, independent store was the growing trend of urban store "decentralization." Many of the city-bound department stores began establishing branches in Montgomery County to meet the competition of these new outlying commercial strips and shopping centers. The sites selected were often part of or close to "proven" locations, such as Silver Spring, and a number of the downtown stores built branches in or

near the existing retail districts. Many of these once-isolated branches, however, soon found themselves part of larger strip real estate promotions, created by developers anxious to capitalize on the draw of a major department store in their midst. Eventually, they suffered the same drawbacks of the downtown areas of the central city from which they initially escaped.

The Hecht Company began the parade of large department stores to Silver Spring—and to Montgomery County—opening its new store behind the Silver Spring Shopping Center in November of 1947. "Our original plans were compounded of business judgement and a gamble," Charles Dulcan, vice-president and general manager of the Hecht Company, said in 1949. "But it also took courage to bring the full facilities of a streamlined, air-conditioned, multi-million dollar department store to a residential area that was only just beginning to

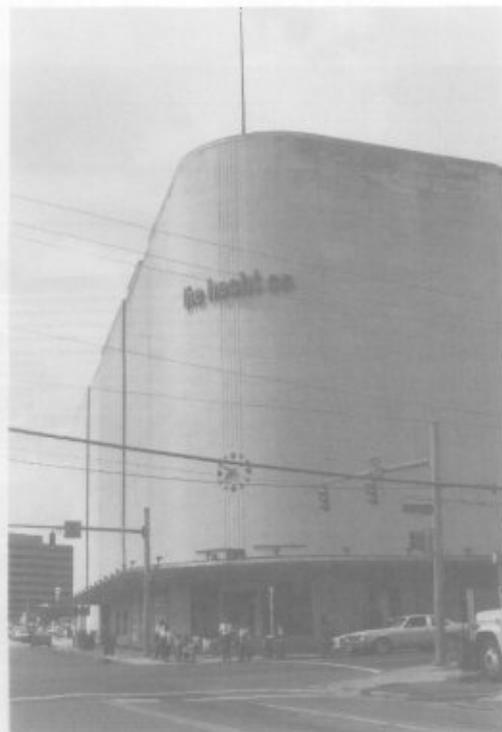


FIGURE 3. The Hecht Company's "streamlined" Silver Spring branch of 1947, as it appears today. (The author)

feel its oats.”¹² Dulcan paid tribute to W. A. Julian and Sam Eig, whom he noted as pioneer developers of the Silver Spring Shopping Center on Georgia Avenue; Eig had purchased the center from the original developers in 1944. “Gentlemen like Mr. Julian and Mr. Eig, the Silver Spring Board of Trade, the County Commissioners, and the Park and Planning Commission were all instrumental in paving the way for modern shopping facilities in the Silver Spring business community,” Dulcan said.¹³

The new Hecht Company building, designed by Abbott, Merkt and Company of New York City, specialists in department store design, incorporated many of the “modern” department store features springing from technological improvements developed at the turn-of-the-century, later refined, and put into use in department stores across America in the

1930s and 1940s. Steel and concrete allowed the creation of new structural systems; elevators and escalators made vertical selling possible; and air-conditioning and modern lighting methods eliminated the variables of climate and daylight, enabling store designers to plan windowless sales floors. The Hecht Company designers, well-versed in these technological improvements, readily employed them in the design of the Silver Spring store.¹⁴

By 1950, the Silver Spring Shopping Center and the Hecht Company had been joined by Jellef’s, Hahn’s Shoes, Sears, Roebuck and Company, J. C. Penney’s, H. L. Green and Company, and numerous other specialty shops, drug stores, banks and restaurants, all filling newly constructed “streamlined” buildings fronting Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue.¹⁵ The postwar rush to become part of the

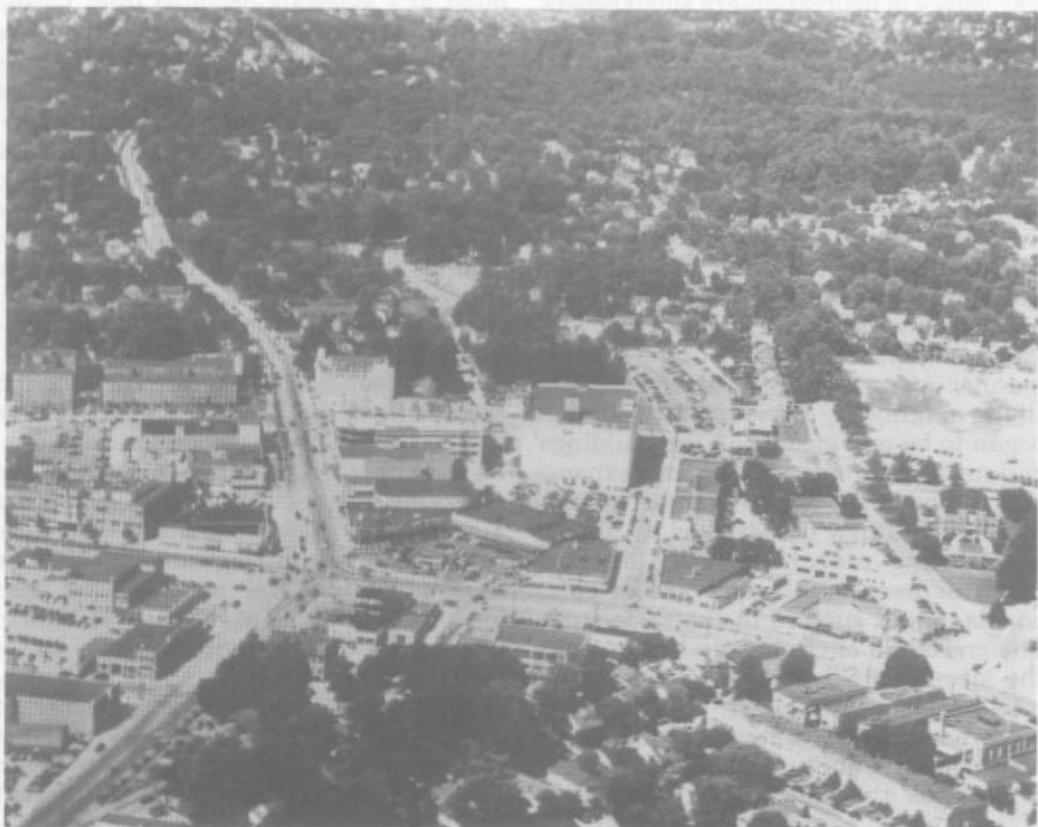


FIGURE 4. The intersection of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road, Silver Spring, filling in ca. 1950. (M-NCPPC)

commercial boom was so great that, by 1950, Silver Spring had become, excepting only Baltimore, the largest business community in Maryland.¹⁶

The design and planning standards set by Ebersson's shopping center of 1938, however, were for the most part not duplicated by those who followed. Architecturally, whereas Ebersson had brought new materials and new styles together into an expressive, unified design, the bulk of the late 1940s—early 1950s commercial buildings in Silver Spring—as throughout the county—had run to repetition of a very limited vocabulary: blank limestone fronts, blond brick rear walls, superficially attached signage. In many respects, much of the commercial designs of the period was no more architecture than the designing of refrigerators or automobiles; perhaps a more appropriate word, popular at the time in Detroit, would be “styling.” Inheriting the pre-war legacy of depression-era shopkeepers, the majority of these buildings were intended to be simply “machines for selling.” And, under the pressure of growing competition from surrounding establishments, many post-war store architects began to think even less about design in functional or aesthetic terms and more about design as solely in the service of merchandising. Building facades became merely poster boards, expressionless walls with signs and slogans mounted, posted, and hung in some manner attracting more attention than their neighbors. Periodic face-liftings began to be provided for in the buildings' designs as part of the continuous expense of doing business. Where a previous shop had failed, a new one, backed by a more aggressive merchandising design, brighter neon lights and louder color panels, might succeed in the same store. The crescendo of chrome and neon along the streets of Silver Spring soon broke into cacophony.¹⁷

“Streamlined” commercial buildings in Montgomery County tended on the whole to overlook the functional differences of their intended occupants. A shoe store, a pharmacy, a jeweler's shop, and a real estate office became architecturally indis-

tinguishable. In many instances, stores were simply stuffed into low-ceilinged cubby holes on the first floors of essentially block-long office buildings, giving much commercial design of the period a superficial, interchangeable character, with little architectural expression above a base level.

As well, the sensitivity with which Ebersson and the 1938 Silver Spring Shopping Center approached the important relationship among the automobile, the customer, and the shopping facility was not repeated by the later Silver Spring developers; many could not reproduce the parking facilities, owing largely to the limited lot sizes available to subsequent developers. When a company such as J. C. Penney's, which opened along Colesville Road in 1950, was fortunate enough to acquire a lot of sufficient size to accommodate both a building and parking facilities, the eventual arrangement of a sidewalk-oriented front facade with a parking lot to the rear of the store only tended to isolate their clientele from the neighboring shops. The location of Penney's in the middle of a main shopping block should have served as a magnet to pedestrians approaching from either corner, luring them past the street-side display windows of the smaller specialty shops on their way to the popular department store. Instead, customers simply drove in, parked behind, did their shopping and then left.

The Silver Spring Board of Trade and the Montgomery County Commissioners realized early on the need for adequate, off-street parking lots to benefit all of the emerging businesses in the Silver Spring district, and by 1949 had made what were expected to be sufficient accommodations by establishing “free parking” and then metered lots.¹⁸ But soon even these proved to be inadequate. Too little parking—and too much traffic—quickly created a pedestrian-hostile environment detrimental to the continued vitality of the commercial district; boom-town Silver Spring reproduced, to a different degree, the problems of the older “downtown” ribbon developments.¹⁹

Concurrently, suburban residential

centers in the county began shifting, moving northward, away from their former Silver Spring core. With the shift came the potential of developing on large, unencumbered parcels of shopping complexes that could build upon the site-plan sensibilities of Eberson's Silver Spring Shopping Center; these new facilities eventually proved to be the downfall of the Silver Spring commercial district.

It was the suburban shopping center, varying from small clusters of a few convenience-goods stores to the larger neighborhood and regional centers, which would come to dominate the post-war commercial scene in Montgomery County and which would eventually eclipse the older pattern of urban-suburban down-county ribbon developments. The Woodmoor Shopping Center at Four Corners, in operation by 1949, and the Wheaton Shopping Center, constructed in sections along Georgia Avenue between 1950 and 1951—respectively two miles and three miles from the Colesville-Georgia intersection forming the core of the Silver Spring commercial district—typified the dozens of neighborhood centers constructed throughout Montgomery County at the same time the Silver Spring district was being filled in by strip developments. Each illustrated a continuation of the design approach inaugurated by the 1938 Silver Spring Shopping Center; each was acutely aware of the automobile's role in suburban shopping, combining adequate parking facilities, double store access, and pedestrian walkways from front to rear in their design. And each represented not only the geographical shift of suburbia, but its beginning fractionization into new patterns of "suburban villages" characterized by large-scale residential developments centered around the neighborhood shopping complex.²⁰

As well epitomizing the new pattern of postwar suburban shopping center design in Montgomery County was the Woodward and Lothrop store at Friendship Heights. Following the trend of downtown department store decentralization, Woodie's broke ground in 1949 for its first large suburban outlet. Although it

too was but a single outlying store, its architects, Starett and Van Vleck, employed many of the principles of the modern shopping center propounded by Eberson and later adopted by the multi-unit complexes. The original six-acre site, located at the intersection of three busy avenues, provided parking for 500 cars; three additional acres to the west were subsequently purchased to accommodate 400 more cars. The parking spaces were arranged to radiate from the building to lessen walking distances. Entrances at the rear basement level and on the street-level first floor provided varied pedestrian access. Loading facilities were completely separated from other areas so as not to disrupt customer traffic. Architecturally, the building blended traditional detailing with a modern design. Once in operation, the complex was repeatedly cited in the *Architectural Record* as embodying "the principles of the ideal shopping center."²¹

From these beginnings came the development of vast regional shopping centers, combining major retail outlets with dozens of small concerns and parking facilities for thousands of cars, which would characterize Montgomery County shopping from the late 1950s to today. Construction of Wheaton Plaza was begun in 1954, although development plans had been years in the making. Development was to be incremental, with the first stage calling for two major department stores, a drive-in restaurant, movie theaters, and numerous small specialty shops, all serviced by a four thousand-car parking lot. The largest department store ever opened by Montgomery Ward up to that time was among the fifty stores nearing completion in the eighty acre shopping center in 1959. A Giant Food Store and a Hot Shoppe restaurant went into operation early in 1959, but the major components of Wheaton Plaza, including a Woodward and Lothrop and Montgomery Ward, would not open until the following year. By 1963, Wheaton Plaza had become the fourth largest-grossing shopping center in the United States, enjoying retail sales of well over \$50 million a year.²²



FIGURE 5. Woodward and Lothrop advertised the opening of the new store at Friendship Heights in 1949 by issuing postcards of its ample parking facilities. (Montgomery County Historical Society)

Planning for Montgomery Mall in Bethesda was begun in 1956 by May Stores Shopping Center, Inc., and Strouse, Greenberg and Company, both of Philadelphia, although actual construction on the site did not start until 1965. When completed in 1968, the \$20 million shopping complex, with fifty-one stores and three banking institutions occupying a fifty-five acre tract, was the largest shopping center in the Washington area, and the first of its now-ubiquitous enclosed all-weather malls.²³

What justified the development of these large shopping complexes was the tremendous growth of new suburban housing developments—and its attendant rise in population—occurring in Montgomery County in the 1950s and 1960s; during the period, the number of county residents exploded from 164,401 in 1950 to over 453,000 by 1966.²⁴ In contrast, the growth of the older commercial centers had come to a halt, due in large part to the construction of facilities closer to the new “middle suburbia.” There

broad sites for shopping centers conveniently situated to the areas of expanding population could be acquired at a fraction of the cost of land adjacent to existing commercial centers. As a result, older shopping areas in the county struggled to attract new major retailers, finding it more and more difficult to expand their aging facilities. In areas such as Silver Spring, where population growth had reached its limits long ago, retail sales as well had not only leveled off but were into irreversible decline. By 1965, the three major commercial centers that had experienced extraordinary growth in the postwar years accounted for only 33.6 percent of the total retail sales in the county, with Silver Spring comprising three-eighths of that third, Rockville another three-eighths, and Wheaton, largely on the strength of the Plaza, the remaining two-eighths.²⁵

The success of the outlying shopping centers forced the older commercial districts to carve out new roles for themselves. Rising office towers of banking, fi-

nancial and professional services soon became interspersed among the remaining specialty shops. Silver Spring's share of the retail market would drop steadily in the following years as the newer suburban malls and regional shopping centers continued to grow at its expense.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800. By Allan Kulikoff. (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986). xvii, 449 pp. Acknowledgments, introduction, index, tables, figures, and maps. \$30.00.

Allan Kulikoff sees his massive examination of the economic, demographic, and political transformation of the Chesapeake region from 1680 to 1800 as a synthesis and extension of the writings of two groups of historians of the region. One group stresses social, economic, and demographic developments in the seventeenth century; the other political and cultural developments in the eighteenth century. Believing that "both groups of historians tend to slight the significance of the half-century before the Revolution," Kulikoff insists that the roots of race, class, and family relations characteristic of the antebellum South "first developed in the Chesapeake region between 1720 and 1770."

A historical materialist, the author rests his study upon an empirical base of data assiduously culled from such sources as probate inventories and wills, customs records, vital registers, genealogies, tax lists, collections of tithables, censuses, and deeds. This data is augmented by a wide range of narrative sources. Realizing that his data might not always be representative, the author conveys the size of the samples, the assumptions underlying the calculations, and supplies missing data through estimation.

Part I, "The Political Economy of Tobacco," surveys the social structure of the region in the seventeenth century, describes economic and demographic changes between 1680 and 1750, and demonstrates that "new class relations" had crystallized by the 1750s. Three large and important structural changes receive special emphasis: declining opportunity for whites, the beginnings of natural increase for whites and blacks, and the rise of chattel slavery. When discussing social class, the author is mainly concerned with how and when "social classes form, disappear, and re-form as the processes of production change." The two linked tasks of class formation, according to Kulikoff, were making the slaves efficient workers and devising a ruling class ideology. The remainder of the book elucidates six

major consequences of the structural changes laid out in Part I. Part II, "White Society," examines replacement of the relatively egalitarian families of the earliest settlers by patriarchal ones, replacement of neighborhoods by kin groups as the primary focus of social interaction, and the emergence of two distinct, but reciprocally linked white supremacist classes—the gentry and the yeoman. Part III, "Black Society," traces the development of black communities, often spanning more than one plantation; the slaves' creation of extended families and kinship networks; and the learning of a new racial etiquette by slaves and masters alike.

In Part II we learn that "the demographic conditions that prevented the development of patriarchal family government disappeared at the end of the seventeenth century." Owners of land and slaves used their wealth as leverage over their children. Children who disobeyed parental authority, for example, "might find themselves cut out of the parental estate." Public and private spheres were largely segregated by gender from the start, and this increased during the second half of the eighteenth century. Men competed in "four fields of honor:" the woods (hunting wild game), the racetrack, the tavern, and the general store. The hallmark of these exclusively male gatherings was as much individualistic competition among males as it was the conversion of male solidarity into daily cooperation.

Turning to kinship, Kulikoff argues that "white families ultimately made kinship, rather than gender or church membership, the basis of social intercourse." Extremely high rates of cousin marriages apparently resulted from deliberate effort "to keep family property within the kinship group." With the decline of immigration and the increase of life expectancy in the early eighteenth century, "concentration of kindred in neighborhoods rose sharply." In Chapter 7, "The Rise of the Chesapeake Gentry," Kulikoff argues that the aforementioned structural changes permitted the gentry to consolidate its power during the late 1700s and early 1800s. Slaves freed gentlemen from daily work and enabled them to seek political leadership more actively. Full implementation of a hierarchical vision of society was inhibited by two political threats to the hegemony of the gentry: rejection by Bap-

tists and Presbyterians of gentry religion, culture, and patronage in the 1760s and 1770s and the American Revolution itself. The authority of "gentlemen" over "yeomanry" was sustained through reciprocal but hierarchically structured exchanges at courthouse and church. By the 1750s and 1760s gentlemen had placed some social distance between themselves and yeomen through different physical standards of living, greater participation in the literate culture, and through the formation of exclusive social clubs.

In Part III, "Black Society," Kulikoff explores the beginnings of Afro-American family life, and the etiquette of race relations. One of the book's major contributions is the identification of three stages in the development of Chesapeake black society. Between 1650 and 1690 blacks constituted only a small part of the total population (three per cent in 1650 and fifteen per cent in 1690). During that period most blacks came to the region via the West Indies, and most of them assimilated white norms. The second period, 1690–1740, was characterized by heavy importation of blacks (most now coming directly from Africa), small plantation size, and social conflicts among blacks. During the third period, 1740–1790, slave imports declined and eventually ceased, plantation size increased, blacks grew in proportion to the white population, earlier African ethnic divisions disappeared, and native blacks formed relatively settled communities. How readily slaves could form their own culture "depended upon both the patterns of forced African immigration to the Americas and the economic and demographic environment that awaited new slaves." For Kulikoff the central element in the pattern of black forced immigration was the sheer diversity of religious beliefs, kinship practices, and forms of social organization among the Africans. Yet, by his own statements, the African origins of slaves during peak periods of importation into the Chesapeake were significantly concentrated in Bight of Biafra ports and those peoples shared many cultural and environmental traits including "important beliefs about the nature of kinship." The giving of child-rearing responsibilities to kindred outside the immediate family and the use of extensive kinship networks may have been much more than mere adaptations to the constraints of slavery (although they were also that). To suggest that the emergence of extensive kinship networks may have been a combination of pre-American patterns (operating without reference to enslavement) and black creativity within the confines of North American bondage does not,

I think, diminish the force of Afro-American creativity that Kulikoff stresses.

Chapter 10, "Slavery and Segregation," suggests that the roots of racial segregation run much deeper than we had supposed. As slave importation ended and the American-born black population began to reproduce itself after the 1740s, planters "possessed both the means of production (land and slaves) and the means of reproduction of the means of production." This change was accompanied by an increasing division of labor among slaves (and whites) between the 1750s and 1770s.

The political crisis of the Revolutionary era contributed two problems directly related to the slaves. First was the question of slave disloyalty during the conflict and second was the "stream of manumissions in the 1780s." These problems gave new life and a sharper edge to racialism, unleashing "a torrent of racist thought." More than ever before dark skin color became both badge and proof of the slaves' innate inferiority. Gentry and yeomen alike convinced themselves that "strict separation of the races by legal conditions and social rule seemed essential to maintain order in a good society."

Allan Kulikoff's strengths are his ability to keep demographic and economic realities constantly before his readers and to persuade us of the explanatory value of such statistics as sex ratios, plantation size, and population density in understanding the major social and political developments in the eighteenth century Chesapeake region. One discomfort is the frequent recourse to examples from Prince George's County, Maryland, where the author did his most vigorous digging in original sources, and the heavy reliance on secondary analysis of data collected by others for the rest of the Chesapeake region. *Tobacco and Slaves*, replete with forty-five tables, thirty-two figures, eighteen maps, and enumerable calculations, is a provocative blend of synthesis and original research that will repay the reader's effort manifold.

ROBERT L. HALL

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Painting in the South: 1564–1980. David S. Bundy, compiler. (Richmond: Virginia Museum, 1983. Pp. xviii, 362.) *The Art of the Old South: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture and the Products of Craftsmen, 1560–1860.* By Jessie Poesch. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983). Pp. xii, 384. \$50.00.

Although they overlap to a limited extent, these are very different books. They differ in

arrangement and in the audience each seeks to address. For that reason, one is not "better" than the other; each is merely different and should be considered on its own merit.

Painting in the South is a catalog of the exhibition of the same name that originated in the Virginia Museum and then traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, New York City, Jackson, Mississippi, Louisville, and New Orleans. As students in the newly-emergent field of material studies know, exhibit catalogs are invaluable sources for detailed information about makers and their products not immediately available elsewhere. This one restricts itself to painting and does not include Baltimore, Annapolis, or Washington, D.C. as part of the "the South" (p. xiv). Nevertheless (and rather curiously), painters who worked in Maryland are included in the volume. An excellent index eases access to them.

The text is divided into five sections or chapters. Each has its own endnotes and is preceded by an "Introduction." The chapters vary in quality and quantity. Carolyn Weekley covers 226 years ("The Early Years, 1564–1790") in forty pages. It is competent and factual though unevenly written. Linda Simmons discusses "The Emerging Nation, 1790 to 1830" next, a forty year period in thirty pages. Unlike Weekley, Simmons breaks her narrative into subsections of painter type and subject, a format that clarifies points of classification and comparison for the reader; it is very good. Jessie Poesch's "Growth and Development of the Old South, 1830 to 1900" follows. Its coverage of these seventy momentous years fills just thirty pages and is a straight-forward narrative, like Weekley's, and readers familiar with Professor Poesch's work will admire its condensation and economy of language. Rick Stewart's piece, "Toward a New South: The Regionalist Approach, 1900–1950," is confused and rambling. It wants conceptualization and reorganization along the lines of the data presented. Donald Kuspit's "The Post-War Period, 1950 to 1980: A Critic's View" is more frank and direct with the reader. While one may disagree with his interpretation(s), for example, his forthright subjectivity rivets the reader's attention to contemporary issues such as the degree of regionalism and modernism, provinciality and cosmopolitanism in Southern painting. I found Kuspit's piece the most provocative precisely because he discusses current issues in traditional forms—which is, in itself, a good Southern, if not American, characteristic.

Following the catalog is an excellent bibli-

ography of general works by or about the individual artists. The illustrations, notes and information are excellent.

The Art of the Old South is a different kind of book. It is a magnificent historical narrative whose text, illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index are all superb. Taken as a whole, it is itself a work of art. Anyone interested in the subject must begin with this book as a point of departure. Written for the layman and specialist alike, it provides new information and insights on the relationship between history and Southern arts.

A professor of art history at Tulane University, Poesch successfully presents the most recent research on the topic, interrelates the information across a broad spectrum of artistic endeavors, and interweaves all within the fabric of Southern history. The reader comes away with a feeling for Southern cultural life as both distinctive and part of the larger American experience.

First of all, this is a *history* of the art of the Old South. It has just four chapters or "parts:" "Beginnings" from 1560 to 1735; "An Established Society" from 1735 to 1788; "A New Nation" from 1788 to 1825; and "The Sense of Separation" from 1825 to 1860. To her great credit, Poesch merely uses this periodization as a backdrop in discussing the evolution of the arts. As she states in her prefatory remarks about "The Sense of Separation:" "Tumultuous as some of these [political] events were, they were background and setting for, rather than formative influences on, the visual arts" (p. 213). That is the topic sentence of a paragraph. She does not try to fool or slip by her readers.

Because of her approach, we discover an increasing interconnectedness in Southern culture as we move through time. That is, there was greater cultural uniformity in the South of the 1850s than there was in the region of the 1790s. Actually, historians would expect this, particularly in the period after the 1820s when the roots of "Southern" nationalism grew thicker and faster. If anything, subregional variations or adaptations perhaps could have played an increasingly larger theme in Poesch's narrative. But that is another book.

GARY L. BROWNE
UMBC

Before the Bridge: Reminiscences. By Phillip J. Wingate (Centreville, Md.: Tidewater Publishers, 1985). 204 pp. \$14.95.

Much of the Eastern Shore life described in Phillip Wingate's book, *Before the Bridge*, has

disappeared. The Chesapeake Bay bridge, which first carried traffic in 1952, has been a great facilitator of the changes that have taken place in Maryland's way of living since the end of World War II.

When Wingate was a boy, in the decades of the twenties and thirties, the people of the Eastern Shore lived out their lives in happy distance from the world beyond the peninsula. Theirs was essentially a society that their English ancestors had established, and it was a society that did not readily accept those from elsewhere—unless (and that sometimes grudgingly) they were affluent—without a substantial trial period. To travel away, one took the train to Wilmington to the Pennsylvania's main line, or drove around the head of the bay, or used one of a fair number of river boat (and later ferry) connections to Baltimore or Annapolis. The bridge changed all that. Population growth in Maryland since 1950 has been the real culprit, but the bridge moved the greater numbers more quickly onto the Shore. Wingate's childhood world is a thing of the past.

Nevertheless, the Eastern Shore is still a land of marshes and rivers, forests and fields, small towns and working farms geographically, economically, and socially tied to the tidal bay and its culture. It is, in the words of National Beer's advertising, the "land of pleasant living." How many suburbanites in the metropolitan region of Baltimore and Washington openly or covertly yearn for the more relaxed pace of Eastern Shore living? A fair number, if automobile traffic is any indicator, and the marshes and fields of Kent Island (the area nearest to the bridge) are giving up their rural charm to the sprawl of housing developments and shopping centers.

Wingate's book gives the harassed urban dweller an evening of nostalgic reverie. It is essentially a memoir, beginning with his boyhood days in the marshes and woods of Dorchester County. Like his fellow Washington College graduate, Gilbert Bryon, Wingate writes with unconcealed love for a boyhood near the water, of closeness to the birds and animals of the area. Unsurprisingly he liked biology, though chemistry later became his life's work. The reminiscences cover Wingate's life up to his earning of a doctorate in chemistry at the University of Maryland in College Park in 1942. They are the story of his formative years with particular emphasis on the individual men and women who most influenced his intellectual development and the formation of his character.

Washington College, where Wingate

enrolled after finishing high school at Crapo in Dorchester, figures prominently in this book. It is a small college that concentrates on the liberal arts, and, though venerable in terms of American history, is not widely known. Wingate lavishes a lot of affection on it, as might anyone who attended such a small college with a relatively homogeneous group of students. His college experiences were not extraordinary, but they impressed themselves in his memory with indelibility and clarity. Their charm lies to no small extent in the fact that Phillip Wingate is a good story teller.

Before the Bridge may well be most intriguing to those readers over fifty who have a knowledge of Maryland in the most recent past. Especially those familiar with Washington College, the University of Maryland, and collegiate athletics will enjoy the light-hearted observations that characterize this book. But to the extent that boyhood fun and learning and youthful and young adult experiences in college and the working world are universal in their appeal, Wingate's stories will captivate a broad readership.

As a farm boy he was unable to resist the allure of Cambridge on Saturday nights. As a young man, Baltimore—the "Baghdad of the Chesapeake"—held a similar fascination for him. Wingate was an athlete and his love of sports shines through in stories of lacrosse, baseball, and basketball. He was also a writer, beginning in college and—almost predictably—under the spell of H. L. Mencken. What stands out most vividly are his sketches of men whom he admires: Dr. E. E. Reed, a Johns Hopkins chemist; Dr. Reginald Truitt, renowned Chesapeake Bay biologist; "Curley" Byrd, president of the University of Maryland; and Dr. Nathan Drake, professor of chemistry at College Park. These vignettes are entertaining and instructive. Throughout, Wingate maintains the wide-eyed fascination of his youth.

Phillip Wingate's style is uncomplicated and unaffected, as befits an Eastern Shoreman. It reflects an inner contentment at home with the Chesapeake country. Serious students of history can add to their understanding of the bay area in the three decades before World War II, and the casual reader will gain an evening of delightful reading. One suspects that this is what Wingate had in mind.

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Searching for a Viable Alternative: The Macedonia Cooperative Community, 1937-58.

By W. Edward Orser. (New York: Burt Franklin & Company, 1981). Pp. ix, 272. Illustrations, index. \$18.95.

The Macedonia Cooperative Community in Northern Georgia was started in 1937 by Morris R. Mitchell, a progressive educator with Southern roots, as an experiment in and demonstration of the possibilities in communal living while achieving an economically stable livelihood. When the original local members moved on to better job opportunities in the cities as the country's prosperity returned, they were replaced by conscientious objectors, veterans of World War II Civilian Public Service camps. Orser has written before of this second group. "Involuntary Community: Conscientious Objectors at Patapsco State Park During World War II" (*Maryland Historical Magazine*, 72 [1977]:132-46.)

In time the prevailing members of the revitalized community felt the need for a religiously-based structure. So many of them joined the Society of Brothers (Brudershof) that Macedonia ceased to exist in 1958.

While comparatively short-lived, the Macedonia community was important in the history of American communal living. In telling the story of its goals and gains, but final dissolution, Orser joins a growing number of historians who augment written records with taped reminiscences. The Macedonia Papers are found in the Swarthmore College Peace Collection and the Morris R. Mitchell Papers in the Southern Historical Collection, Univer-

sity North Carolina, Chapel Hill. They include correspondence, formal reports, contemporary magazine and newspaper stories and unpublished graduate papers. To this traditional documentation Orser adds interviews with seventeen people who were part of the Macedonia Community—among them Mitchell, the founder; Henry Dyer; and Alice and Staughton Lynd—in order "to provide samples of the rich personal dimension of the Macedonia experience." Interview material is well integrated into the text and meticulously identified. It is used to present differing points of view, to clarify undocumented areas, and to demonstrate emotional responses—both negative and positive. Orser wisely notes the significance of people who refused to be interviewed. Additionally, several pages of interview excerpts appears from each of six interviews chosen, it appears, mostly for flavor, not fact.

Oral historians increasingly call for some minimum ground rules in the use of taped interviews. Orser never uses the term "oral history," but he has gathered telling information in this way and relied on it heavily in his attempt to be faithful to the experiences of the Macedonia participants. It would be heartening to know that he has chosen to donate his tape and transcript collection to either one of the two places holding the collections mentioned above—and that they are equipped to include this form of documentation in their archives.

BETTY MCKEEVER KEY
Maryland Historical Society

Robert Davis, Sr.: A Man Who Broke New England's Monopoly on Grandparents

WILLIAM D. PATRICK

IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN. I ROBERT Davis Senr. of Worcester County in the Province of Maryland Gent. Being in health of Body and Perfectly sound in Wit and memory (the Infirmities of old age only Excepted) calling to mind the mortality of my Life and the Uncertainty of Time I have in this World do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament and do Give and Bequeath such Worldly Estate as it hath Pleas'd God to Bless me with in this Life. . . ." Such was the preamble to the will of Robert Davis, Sr., written 8 February 1767 and annulled by court decree 10 January 1771, in which he named his seven sons (two of whom had predeceased him), seven of his grandsons, and one great-grandson.¹

Probably there would have been nothing remarkable about this will, other than the reason for its annulment, were it not for the fact that in the early years of the Maryland Colony grandfathers were a scarce commodity. "A man who came to Maryland in his early twenties could expect to live only about twenty more years," says social historian Lorena S. Walsh in her essay "*Till Death Us Do Part*": *Marriage and Family in Seventeenth-Century Maryland*. "By age forty-five this man and many of his companions would be dead. Native-born sons fared only slightly better than their fathers. A boy reaching majority in southern Maryland before 1720 had only about twenty-five more years to live. In contrast, men reaching age twenty in the Plymouth Colony in the same period could expect to live an additional forty-

eight years."² This contrast in longevity has even led one historian to suggest that grandparents may have been a New England invention.³

Robert Davis, Sr., of Worcester County, Maryland, was already about thirty-four years of age when, in 1708, his name first appears in the Maryland records. Had he conformed to the actuarial statistics applicable to his time he would have been dead by 1720. Instead of seven sons, he would have had only four or five, only one of whom would have been above the age of thirteen. However, Robert defied the statistics and lived well beyond his ninety-second birthday, possibly even beyond his ninety-fourth. And the seven sons, seven grandsons, and one great-grandson mentioned in the will are only part of the story. Of his descendants whom we have been able to identify, twenty-five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren had been born by the time he made his will. Robert may also have had several daughters, but their names have not been found and we know nothing of their descendants. His will named his five surviving sons (referred to in the will as "my children"): William, Thomas, Robert, John, and Matthias. The existence of other children, however, is indicated by the final account of William Davis, his administrator, recorded in November 1772. This account stated that the balance of the decedant's estate was to be distributed amongst his eight children, including the accountant.⁴ Unfortunately, we have found no reference to a wife of Robert in any of the records we have seen.

On 15 September 1708, identifying himself as "Robert Davis, weaver," he

William D. Patrick resides in Silver Spring, Maryland.

joined William Davis, carpenter, in purchasing a six hundred-acre tract of land called *Adventure* in a part of Somerset County which later became Worcester, on the easternmost side of Askinimkonson Neck, on the northwest side of the main branch of the Pocomoke River.⁵ This tract adjoined the plantation *Mulberry Grove* belonging to the Quaker George Truitt. William Davis, carpenter, who married Truitt's daughter Elizabeth,⁶ occupied the half of *Adventure* nearest to his father-in-law.⁷ William and Robert may have been brothers, but this is only a matter of conjecture. It is evident, though, that they were related, as we find two of William's sons, Truitt Davis and Levi Davis, signing Robert's inventory as nearest of kin.⁸

Robert appears to have prospered as a planter and continued to live on his half of the tract *Adventure* for the rest of his life. He made only one small addition to his land-holdings, an adjoining fifty-acre tract called *Pig Penn Ridge*, which he patented in 1750.⁹ His name appears regularly in the annual tax lists for Bogerternorton Hundred, Somerset County, which have survived.¹⁰ From these tax lists we can approximate the birth years of all seven of his sons as their names first appear as taxables in Robert's household when they turned sixteen: William, who is in the list for 1723 (the earliest extant list), must have been born by 1707, Thomas about 1708, Ishmael about 1712, Benjamin about 1716, Robert about 1720, John about 1723, and Matthias about 1724. Robert's surviving sons, then, ranged in age from about forty-three to sixty when Robert made his will.

In his will, Robert Davis divided his three hundred acres of *Adventure* between his eldest son, William, and his grandson Henry Davis, son of Thomas, with the proviso that Thomas should enjoy the use of Henry's share during his lifetime. Robert also gave ten acres of *Pig Penn Ridge* to William and willed the remaining forty acres of that tract to John Davis son of John Davis, blacksmith. This latter legatee was a grandson of Thomas and great-grandson of Robert. His father, John Davis, blacksmith, had

died about 1766,¹¹ leaving a widow Sophia and four young children: Nancy, Nellie, Leah, and John.¹²

To each of his sons William and John and his grandsons Robert, son of Thomas, Shadrack, son of Ishmael (under twenty-one), and Abijah and Matthias Davis sons of Benjamin, Robert bequeathed a slave. Ishmael Davis had died in 1760 or 1761, leaving a will in which he mentioned his wife Patience and six children: Martha, Rachel, Mary, Benjamin (not yet eighteen), James, and Shadrack.¹³ Benjamin had died in 1760. His will mentioned only his two sons, Matthias and Abijah, to whom he left all his lands.¹⁴ However, the records of St. Martin's Church tell us that Benjamin and Mary Baddard had eight children, all of whom were born before their grandfather died: Ann, 173-; Matthias, 174-; Leah, 174-; Mary, 174-; Abijah, 1752; Zipporah, 1753; Esther, 175-; and Sophia, 17--. The same church record gives us the date of marriage of their son Matthias to Martha Powell (1764) and the births of two of that couple's children: Benjamin, 1765; and Mordecai, 1767.¹⁵

After providing bequests of personalty to his sons Matthias and William, to grandson Thomas Davis son of Thomas, and to his housekeeper Rebecca Kelly, and a bequest of two bulls and a heifer to his son William, Robert willed that all of the rest of his livestock was to be divided equally between his sons Robert and Matthias. Evidently, these two sons were not happy with their legacies and they proceeded to file a "libel and complaint" in which they charged that for eight or ten years before his death their father was in his dotage and addicted to drinking strong liquors and was too intoxicated to make a will.

In response to this charge, Mary Davis, widow of Benjamin, submitted a signed statement, dated 14 April 1770, saying, "I the subscriber do hereby Certifie that about last Christmas was a year I was at Robert Davis's in company with my son Abijah Davis and heard the said Robert Davis tell his grandson Abijah Davis that he had given him a Negro girl which he then Show to them Named Flora." A sim-

ilar statement, signed by the grandson Abijah, was written on the reverse of Mary's statement. These statements tell us that Robert was still alive at Christmas 1768 and that, in the opinion of the subscribers, he knew then what he had said in the will drawn up in February 1767. Another statement, signed by Thomas Davis, reads in part, ". . . at the time that Robert Davis (my grandfather) made his will . . . he was in his Perfect Senses and that he was then in his health and that nothing Appeared to Ail him but the feebleness of old Age, as he was at that time about Ninety two years of age." From Thomas's statement we can conclude that Robert had been born in about 1674.

Whatever the influence these statements may have had on the Court, there was another aspect to the case which provided a legal basis for the Court's decision to annul the will of Robert Davis, Sr. The will had been witnessed by four persons: Rownd Given, Naomi Davis, James Noble, Sr., and another person whose name is indecipherable. Rownd Givan and Naomi Davis, the only surviving witnesses, testified that they had been called to sign the will, but neither of them had heard the testator say whether it was his will or not, when it was read to him by James Noble.

It is difficult to see what Robert and Matthias Davis hoped to gain by having their father's will set aside. In the absence of a valid will all of Robert's land went to their eldest brother, William, as Robert's heir at law. Apparently in recognition of his father's wishes regarding the bequest to Henry Davis son of Thomas, William in his own will, probated 4 June 1773, made a bequest of fifty acres of land to his "cousin" (nephew) Henry Davis, leaving the rest of his plantation to his sons Robert and Nixon Davis.¹⁶

Although William's will mentioned only two sons, Robert and Nixon, we find from the will of his widow Ann Davis, who died in 1788,¹⁷ that he had seven other children: Tamor (m. Samuel Magee),¹⁸ Sally (m. Isaac Phillips),¹⁹ Naomi, Elizabeth, William, and Matthias. Of all of these, only Matthias,

born about 1772, appears to have arrived on the scene after his grandfather's death.²⁰

William must not have felt any need to make a bequest to Robert's young great-grandson John Davis son of John Davis, blacksmith, who lost his potential forty-acre inheritance by the nullification of his great-grandfather's will. The boy's grandfather, Thomas Davis, Sr., had made provision for him in April 1769, when he deeded to John Davis (an infant) a hundred and twenty acres of his own land near Robert Davis's plantation.²¹

Two other grandchildren born while Robert Davis, Sr., was still living were John and Mary Davis, children of Robert's sixth son, John, and his wife Martha, the widow of John Read, Jr., of Somerset County.²² Both of these children were born before 10 December 1762, when they were given bequests in the will of their father's friend James Johnson, gentleman.²³ Whether Robert's two landless sons, Robert and Matthias, who brought about the annulment of his will, had any families we do not know, nor do we know when they died. We have found no additional information in the Worcester County records which we can identify with either of them.

POSTSCRIPT

The story of Robert Davis, Sr., and his family would not be complete without some mention of the slave Jacob, whose name helps in tying together the records of four generations of this family. Robert's will had mentioned six slaves: a negro "fellow" called Prince, a boy Peter, a wench Sara, a child Flora, a boy Prince, and a girl Dinah. When the inventory of Robert's estate was exhibited 2 March 1771, two additional names were included in the list of slaves: a small girl, Labrue, and a small boy, Jacob. On 23 April 1784 the inventory of Robert's son John Davis, who had died in 1783, included a negro boy Jacob, fourteen years of age.²⁴ John's widow Martha, who also died in 1783, left a will in which she bequeathed the boy, Jacob, to her son, John Davis, for his lifetime, after which Jacob was to go to her grandson, James Davis.²⁵

Her son John, in turn, bequeathed Jacob to his son James in 1810.²⁶ Finally, in December 1816 the will of James Davis provided that his negro man Jacob was to be free when he paid James's executor two hundred and forty dollars.²⁷ Jacob's age was shown as forty-six in the inventory of James Davis exhibited 9 January 1817.²⁸

Finding Jacob's name and age in these records has been very reassuring to one who has struggled to sort out all of the John Davises in the Worcester County records and who otherwise might feel a bit insecure in identifying the John Davis who married the widow Read as the son of Robert Davis, Sr. Jacob, who apparently served three generations of this Davis family, has also been of service to a descendant of the family over one hundred and fifty years later.

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19. Renunciation by Ruth Phillips, 1801, JBR No. 1 Wills (Worcester) 201.
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24. JW No. 11 Inventories (Worcester) 58-61.
25. Will of Martha Davis, prob. 1783, Worcester Co., Md. JW No. 4 Wills (Worcester) 519.
26. Will of John Davis, prob. 1810, Worcester Co., Md., MH No. 4 Wills (Worcester) 224-225.
27. Will of James Davis, prob. 1817, Worcester Co., Md., MH No. 10 Wills (Worcester) 231-232.
28. MH No. 16 Inventories (Worcester) 96-100.

BOOK NOTES

Mortality Schedule of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, 1880. By Janet Wilson Riley. (Silver Spring: Family Line Publications, 1986). 53 pp. Indexed. \$8.00 plus 5% sales tax for Maryland residents.

Between 1850 and 1880, census enumerators were required to keep a list of all persons who died in each district of each county, since 31 May of the previous year. The 1880 Mortality Schedule gives the household number, name of dec., age, sex, race, married or widowed, place of birth, father's place of birth, mother's place of birth, occupation, month of death, and cause of death. The compiler has transcribed these records just as they appeared, and a surname index enables researchers to find a particular name. There is a list of abbreviations for places of birth, and a second list of symbols used for occupations. The book is an important addition to Eastern Shore source materials, and libraries and researchers working with Eastern Shore families will want to order a copy from the publisher, at 13405 Collingwood Terrace, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20904.

ROBERT BARNES
Perry Hall, Md.

Directory of Genealogical Societies in the U.S.A. and Canada. Mary Keysor Meyer, editor. Sixth edition. (Published by the author, 1986). vii, 70 pp. \$19.00, plus \$1.50 for postage and handling, and 5% sales tax for Maryland residents.

The sixth edition of Mrs. Meyer's work lists names and addresses of 1700 genealogical societies in the United States and Canada as well as 250 independent genealogical periodicals. In preparing the work, the editor sent flyers to the societies asking them to respond with information on library holdings, special projects and publications. Unfortunately many of the societies did not respond, but their names and addresses are included as a service to the readers. In this issue societies are listed alphabetically by name under the state heading. The usefulness of the work is enhanced by a list of abbreviations used, a list of computer interest publications, and a list of late registrations. The Directory has been endorsed by the Federation of Genealogical Societies and by the National Genealogical Society, and is highly recommended for libraries and genealogists.

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NEWS AND NOTICES

CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS

Freedom Fettered: Blacks and the Constitutional Era in Maryland 1776-1810 is the title of a conference to be held at Morgan State University on October 2-3, 1987 in celebration of the bicentennial of the Constitution. Papers on any aspect of the history and culture of Afro-Americans in Maryland between the years 1776 and 1810—art, music, demography, interracial contacts, science, voting behavior, protest, petitions, and genealogy are welcome. The conference is co-sponsored by the Maryland Hall of Records, the Maryland Commission for Afro-American History and Culture, and the Maryland Historical Society which is planning an exhibit of Joshua Johnston's art. Deadline for proposals is April 30, 1987. For more information contact the Conference Coordinator, Elaine G. Breslaw, Professor of History, Morgan State University, Baltimore, Md. 21239, (301) 444-3344.

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION OPENING AT THE MARYLAND COURT OF APPEALS BLDG.

This special photography exhibition, entitled *MARYLAND—AS SEEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHERS*, is being sponsored and funded by the Council on Fine Art Photography, and honors the Bicentennial of the Annapolis Convention, and the 125th anniversary of the writing of the State song, "Maryland, My Maryland," by James Ryder Randall.

This is the first fine art photography exhibition to be shown at the Court of Appeals Building, and the exhibition includes works by photographers from The Free State, and from Virginia and the District of Columbia.

The exhibition will also feature a special one-man-show of black & white images by distinguished fine art photographer Lowell Anson Kenyon. A native Marylander, Kenyon is also a nationally known professional photographer, teacher, and author. His work has been widely published and shown abroad, and several of the photographs in this exhibition were published in his most recent book, "The Art of Architectural Photography."

The exhibition, which is composed of contemporary photographs, depicts the Maryland you may have missed—interesting vignettes

of things which are seldom noticed or appreciated by the casual observer. The exhibition is made-up of color and black & white photographs, and graphically portrays the myriad of sensibilities and styles that infuse the creative world of contemporary fine art photography. This show is for everyone who loves Maryland or photography and the arts.

The exhibition, which will be shown in the main lobby of the Maryland Court of Appeals Building, will open on Saturday, October 11, 1986 and will continue through December 5, 1986. Viewing hours are: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday; and 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. Admission is free. For additional information on the exhibition, please call 301 897-0083. The Court of Appeals Building is located at 361 Rowe Boulevard in Annapolis.

HAGLEY PROGRAM CALL FOR APPLICANTS

The Hagley Museum and Library in cooperation with the University of Delaware jointly sponsor The Hagley Program in the History of Industrial America, a two- to four-year program leading either to an M.A. or a Ph.D. degree for students interested in careers as professionals in museums and historical agencies or as college teachers. The Hagley Program's academic focus is on the social history of American industrialization. Within a wide-ranging history program, Hagley Fellows study the context and consequences of economic and technological change wrought by industrialization, including its impact on the lives of American workers.

Financial aid consisting of a stipend of \$6,250 per year the first two years and \$6,650 the second two years, full tuition, and a small travel fund is available. In addition, an allowance of \$1,200 is available to married students with dependent children. These awards are renewable for a maximum of three years. Deadline for application is February 1, 1987 for the academic year 1987-88.

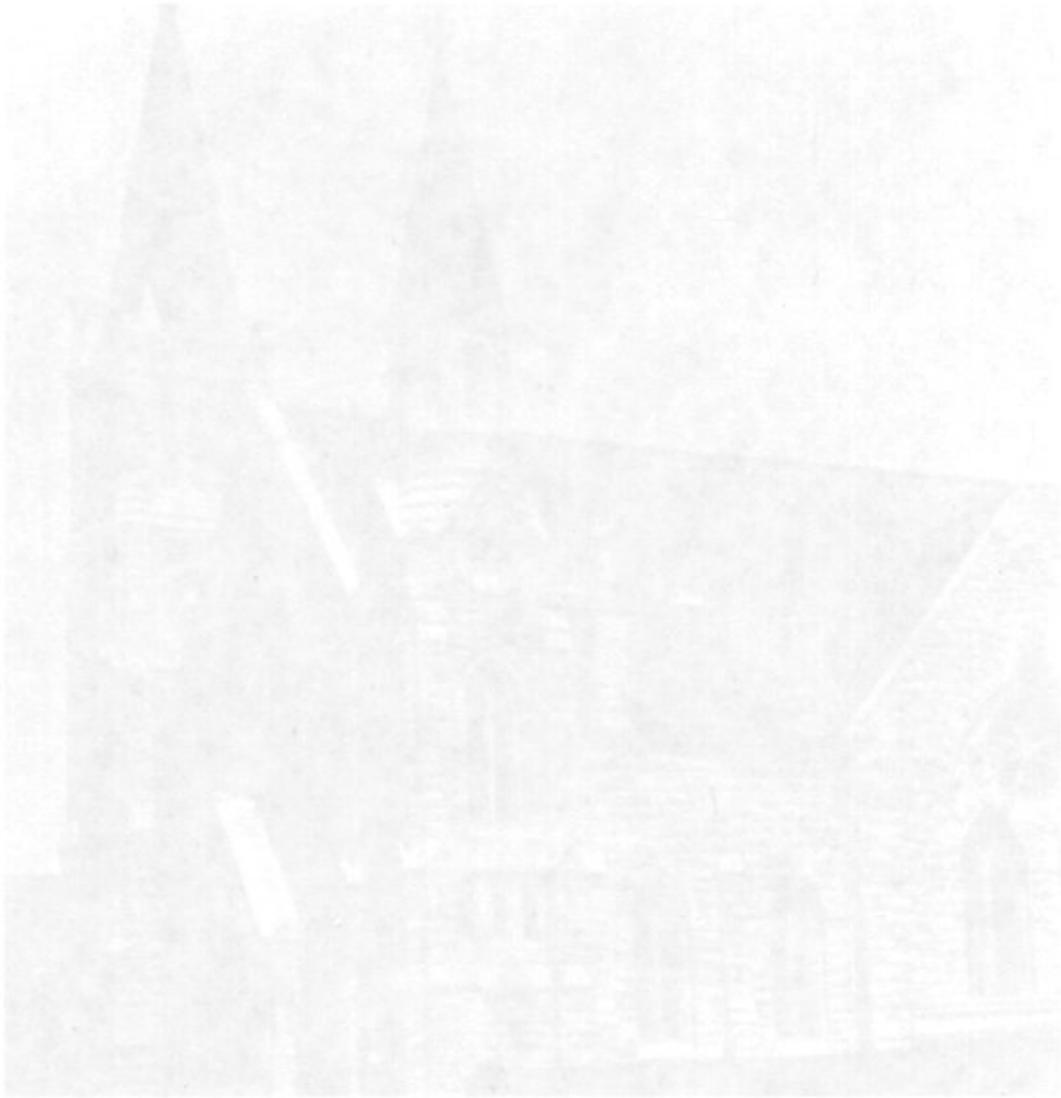
For further information write: Brian Greenberg, Coordinator, The Hagley Program in the History of Industrial America, The Hagley Museum and Library, P.O. Box 3630, Wilmington, DE 19807, or telephone (302) 658-2400, Ext. 244.

**WILDLIFE STAMP AND PRINT PROGRAM
ANNOUNCES SECOND SERIES**

The Wildlife Conservation Stamp and Print Program of the Maryland Forest, Park and Wildlife Service has introduced its second series of stamps and prints, this year featuring a ruby-throated hummingbird. The money received from the sale of prints and stamps is used only for the management and restoration of Maryland's nongame and endangered species. Wildlife Conservation Stamps sell for \$5.00, signed and numbered limited edition prints sell for \$35.00. For more

information, call (301) 269-2558 for a recorded message, or (301) 269-3776 to receive an order form.

Also available this year are Wildlife Sponser Kits which include a Wildlife Conservation Stamp, a hummingbird feeder, a copy of *Maryland Magazine*, a natural resources map, and a poster about peregrine falcons. Sponser Kits sell for \$10.00 and are available at all Department of Natural Resources Regional Service Centers, the Department of Natural Resources' main office in Annapolis, and selected state parks.



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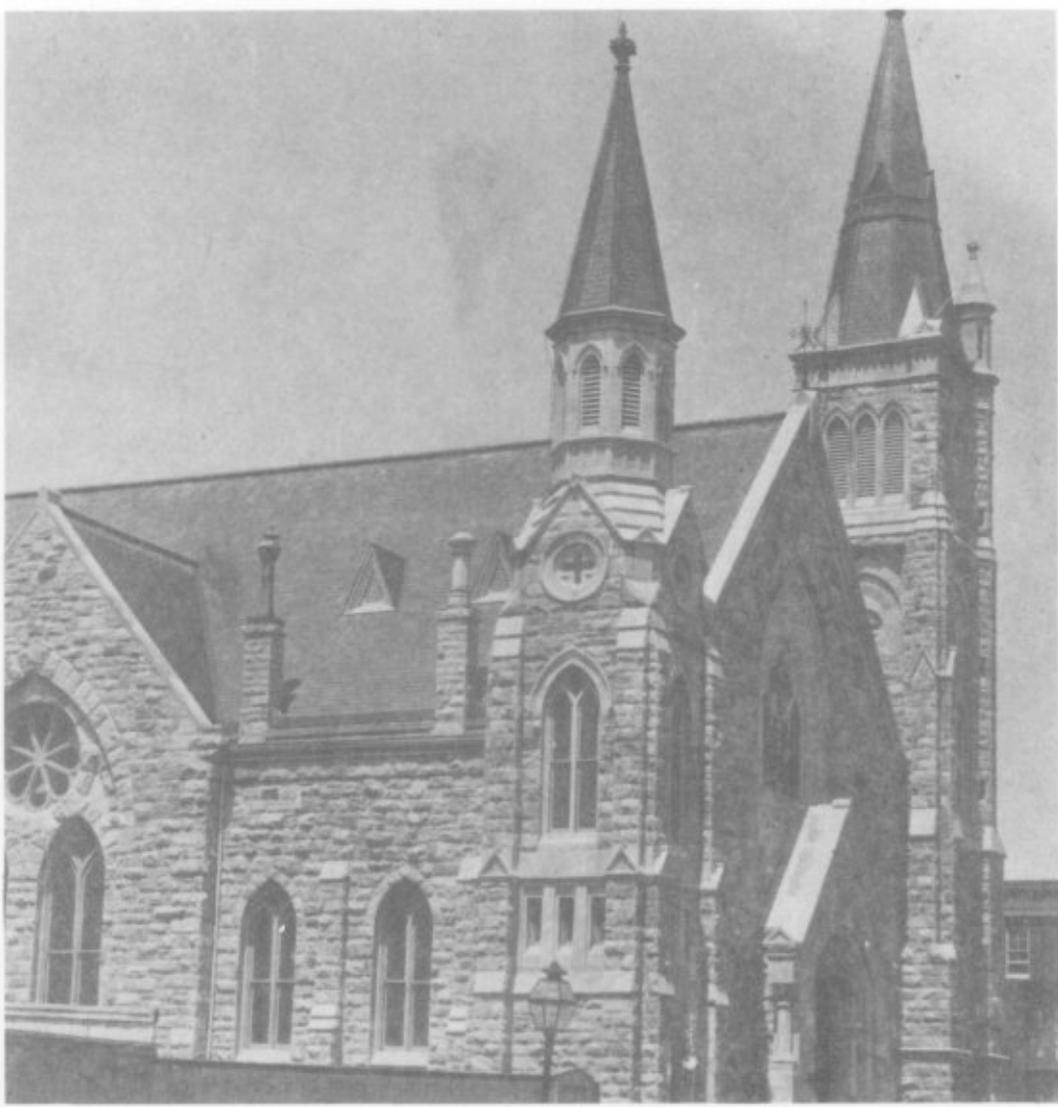
PICTURE PUZZLE

Each installment of the Maryland Historical Magazine illustrates a photograph in the collection of the Prints and Photographs Division of the Maryland Historical Society. This issue's puzzle was taken from a late nineteenth century stereoview. Test your knowledge of Maryland and help us to document our collection by identifying this church and its location.

The Fall 1986 Picture Puzzle shows the intersection of Howard, Liberty, and Lombard Streets decorated for the 1880 Sesqui-Centennial. The monument is a facsimile of the obelisk known as Cleo-

patra's Needle, which was exhibited in New York. Baltimore's Cleopatra's Needle stood 80 feet high, was constructed of wood and canvas, and painted with accurate hieroglyphics. Special policemen were required to keep the crowds from chipping "souvenirs" from the obelisk.

Send your response to the Picture Puzzle to:
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Madeline Abramson	Public Programs Secretary
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"Vincent Garofolo's Store," East Lombard Street, Baltimore, 1926. From the Society's popular "Maryland Under Glass" photograph exhibit.

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REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

I am pleased to report that the year ended June 30, 1986 was an extremely productive period for the Maryland Historical Society. Of special significance was the change in the date of the Annual Meeting from October to June so that the administrative year and fiscal year would coincide. This change will result in increased efficiency in many areas of the Society's operations.

The financial condition of the Society at year end was excellent. The value of the endowment reached a new high and a sizeable budget surplus was developed from operations. Excellent results were achieved in membership income, annual giving, and investment income. The eighth annual Maryland Antiques Show and Sale, The Society's major fund-raising effort, was a great success.

A major improvement was made to the exhibition space and a number of important acquisitions were made by the museum and by the library during the year. The Society sought to fulfill its educational role, particularly to the more than 15,000 children visitors through important exhibitions and innovative programs.

The success of 1986 was made possible by the talents and dedication of the staff, the volunteers, and the membership. The Society enters the new year with optimism and with every reason to expect further achievements in serving the citizens of Maryland.

WILLIAM C. WHITRIDGE
Chairman, Board of Trustees



William Whitridge
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The fiscal year 1985-1986 was an excellent one for The Society.

Our financial situation was stable and the year end figures showed a positive balance in the budget. Barbara Sarudy, our Administrative Director, did a splendid job in our continuing effort to improve all aspect of the Society's day to day functions.

The staff of the Society remained essentially intact. In the prior year we had made a number of changes. Our present staff is experienced and capable.

The Library, the Gallery, and the Education Department (our three main divisions) all had excellent years under their respective heads, Karen Stuart, Stiles Colwill and Judy Van Dyke.

Our Public Programs were extended. This increased activity was reflected by the addition of a calendar of events, which now is sent to the members three times a year.

An amendment to the By-Laws was passed changing the Society's Annual Meeting from October to June.

Pursuant to a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Society conducted a study of the directions it must take in order to increase its effectiveness and prepare for the future. A major aim of the Director's office will be to position the Society for the 1990's and beyond.

Respectfully submitted,
J. JEFFERSON MILLER II
Director

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is my pleasure to report on the Trustee's stewardship of your Society in this its 142nd year. We have had a successful year, a year of progress on all fronts. Largely responsible for this solid performance are the members of the Society's senior management staff. Jeff Miller, our Director, has brought to the Society the unusual blending of curatorial and business skills important to the successful completion of our many and varied programs. Barbara Sarudy, the Director of Administration, has successfully completed a review of our procedures and finances and has implemented a variety of cost-saving programs throughout the Society. Stiles Colwill, our Chief Curator, has focused his attention this past year on improving the effectiveness of the display of objects from the Museum's rich collections. Karen Stuart, the newly-appointed Head Librarian, has focused her attention on improving service to our Library public and on the expansion of our collections of printed materials pertaining to Maryland's history. These four, ably supported by the other members of our staff, give your Society the vitality that has been its hallmark.

Of particular interest to the membership is the continued improvement in the finances of the Society. During this past fiscal year, revenues in most critical categories exceeded our budget while our expenses generally ran below budget. Of note are the Annual Giving Campaign, where contributions from corporations and individuals increased to a new record level and the income yield from the Society's Endowment where the three professional investment management firms employed by the Trustees to manage the Society's funds generated higher-than-expected income. We closed the year with our second consecutive operating surplus which, in turn, allowed the Trustees to make a significant transfer to the Endowment, as well as fund several areas of critical need. Special provisions by the Trustees included funds for the restoration of the exterior of the Enoch Pratt House, a grant for the acquisition of badly needed audiovisual equipment by the Educational Department, a grant for slide handling and storage equipment for the Registrar's Department, the establishment of a funded depreciation account to provide needed maintenance for our facilities, and, finally, the establishment of unrestricted acquisition funds for the Gallery, the Library, the Maritime Museum, and the Genealogical Collections. The Trustees have enthusiastically endorsed a policy of budgeting operating surpluses and then using the resulting funds for badly needed special projects and for reinvestment in our Endowment. With many traditional sources of institutional funding, for example, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, reducing their budgets, we feel an increasing need to use our limited resources as wisely as possible.

Your society has set for itself an ambitious mission. It is the State's prime repository for the evidence of Maryland's material and written culture. As such, it is a vital force for the preservation of Maryland's heritage. These roles are expressed in the Museum which maintains an extensive collection of objects in both the fine and decorative arts, and in the Library which focuses on the printed record of Maryland's history and of the genealogy of its citizens. These Gallery and Library resources are used by the staff of the Education Department to bring Maryland history alive for thousands of the State's school children. Similarly, specialized programs, lectures, demonstrations, and workshops are held throughout the year for the general public to explain important events of the past, to demonstrate the arts and crafts of our ancestors, and to fill in the missing pieces of Maryland's history frequently overlooked in the curricula of our schools. Our programs include those held within the walls of the Museum and Library and, in addition, an increasing focus on traveling exhibits and lectures held throughout the state. One new program introduced this past year was a series of evening lectures held aboard the "Minnie V," a working skipjack berthed in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. These lectures under sail were enormously successful and will be expanded next year.

As we look ahead, each of us must recognize that the Society's success depends on the support of its members. I have touched upon your financial support this past year—Annual Giving reached a new high. I should also touch upon the generous giving of your time—volunteers contributed over 16,000 hours to the Society and permitted us to plan and complete programs which would otherwise be impossible for our limited professional staff. Your Society is more than its superb collections, it is more than the bricks and mortar of its buildings, it is our responsibility to this and future generations to preserve and keep alive the spirit and traditions which have made the State of Maryland what it is today.

BRIAN B. TOPPING
President

We list those members and friends who made contribution to the Society between July 1, 1985 and June 30, 1986. We wish to express our sincere appreciation for those gifts under \$100 which we are unable to include.

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The Reinstallation of the Society's permanent collection galleries was proven successful at its reopening in September, 1985, as evident in this display from the Empire period.

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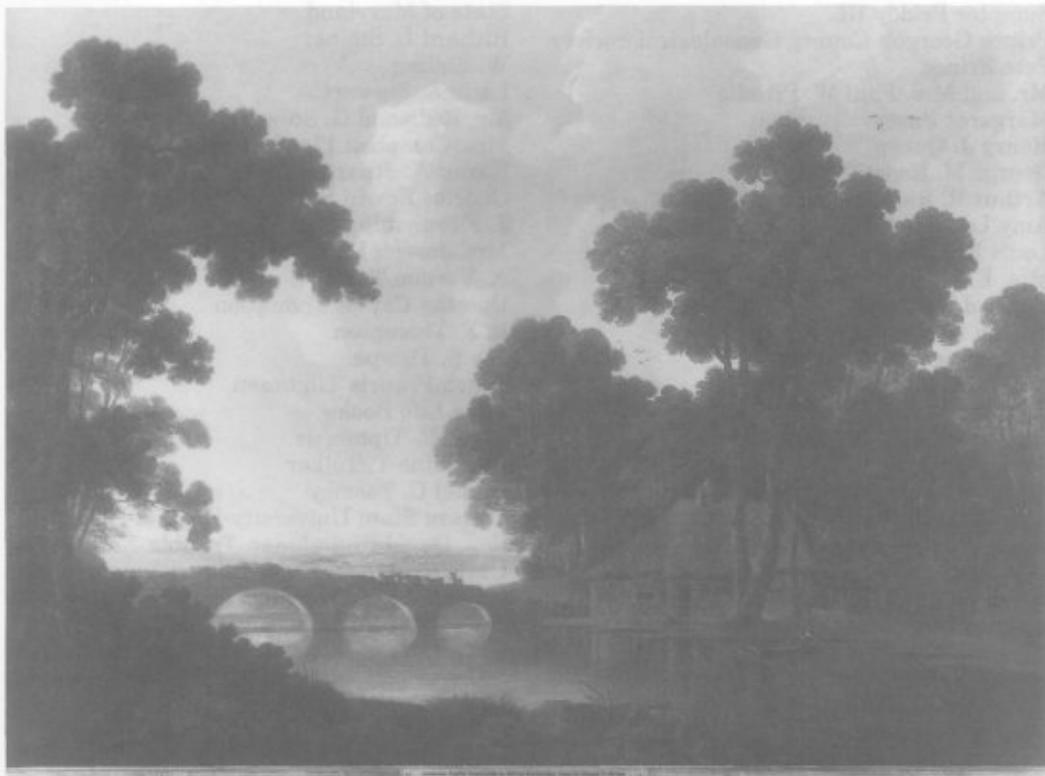
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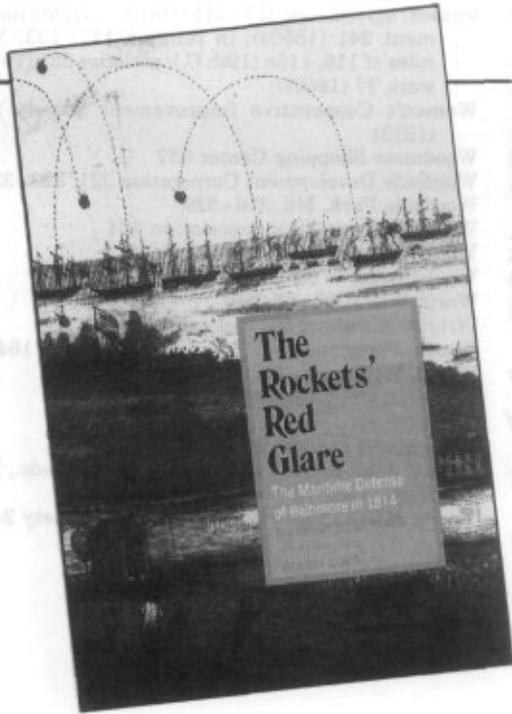
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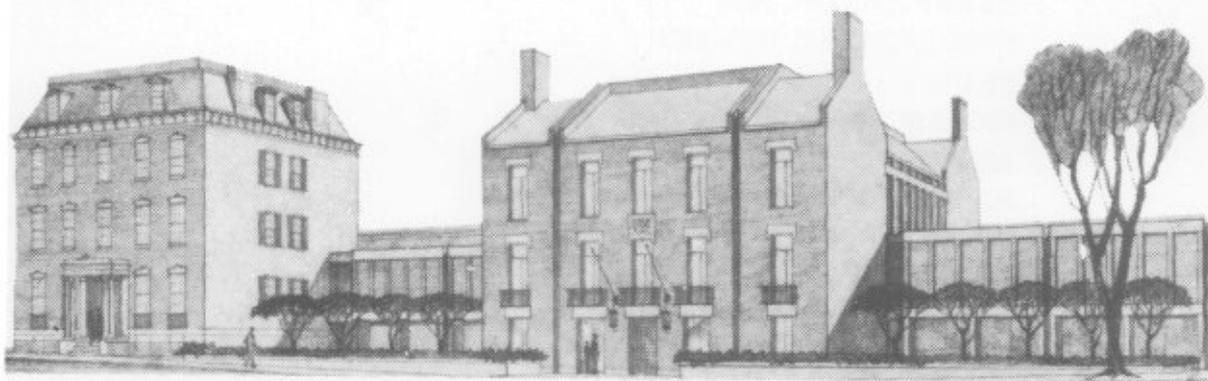
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